FILIAL INDISCRETIONS;

OR, THE

FEMALE CHEVALIER.

VOL. I.

FILIAL INDISCRETIONS;

OR, THE

FEMALE CHEVALIER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

" I have often thought, nay, am abſolutely of opinion,
" that, when the ſable ſcroll of all our *ills* ſhall be diſplayed
" before that awful tribunal, where the beſt of men may
" tremble at the idea of appearing, and where all will moſt
" aſſuredly be arraigned, every unneceſſary pang which we
" have inflicted on the brute creation will there appear as
" wanton crimes againſt us."

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VOL. I.

Wakefield:

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FILIAL INDISCRETIONS.

LETTER I.

Mr. Belfield to Captain Belfield.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

SO, while we were adding rivers of tears to the waters which we apprehended had overwhelmed you, and were increaſing the winds, which we underſtood had blown you to the bottom, with our inceſſant ſighs, you were ſolacing yourſelf on the lap of Luxury in the aromatic groves of Ceylon! Thou wert always a

miraculous ſellow, Hervey, and art moſt miraculouſly recovered juſt in time to ſave more than one family from taking a very long journey to ſee you—in the other Country.

Our dear mother was inconſolable at the report of your loſs. Her grief was a continued paroxyſm! From its violence, and her unuſual fund of piety, which, great as it always was, ſeemed daily to increaſe, I flattered myſelf it would ſoon have ſubſided into reſignation; but time ſtill added voracity to the corroding Canker-worm, and, about a week before I received your packet, I was moſt ſeriouſly alarmed for her. In ſhort, ſuch was her ſituation that it was a fortnight before I dared to communicate the poſitive intelligence of your exiſtence.

I began to open the proſpect of your eſcape by an anonymous paragraph, ſtating that five men belonging to the ſhip

ſhip in which you ſailed had been diſcovered on one of the ſmall Iſlands of the Maldives.—Hope will ſupport itſelf on ſlender twigs indeed !—This ſoothed our mother's mind conſiderably.

Another paragraph appeared, announcing names for the men ſo found; among which was that of *Belford*. Catching our worthy parent's eager eye, —"*Belford* is a name very ſimilar to "ours, Madam; and ſmall miſtakes, in "ſuch caſes, are eaſily made."—"It "might be ſo," ſhe ſighed; and dwelt with delight on the ſurmiſe.

Pleaſed that my artifice had ſucceeded ſo well, I ventured to communicate the contents of your packet, and received additional delight from the tranſports I adminiſtered. For ſuch a mother, Hervey, it is impoſſible to yield too much attention. Nor, in a ſituation ſo critical, could any poſſible precaution be deemed

unneceſſary.

Caroline—our giddy Caroline, when you left us,—is now become a fine young woman. Her filial tenderneſs is exceſſive: and had affliction robbed us of our Parent, I have great reaſon to believe we ſhould have loſt our ſiſter too. Thus the report of your death, my dear friend placed me in a ſituation which put all my philoſophy to the teſt; and, had nothing elſe occurred, I ſhould not have been very eager to have entered that *pale* which you, as uſual, treat ſo cavalierly, yet would be the firſt to ſtep into, could you poſſeſs the full blown beauties of your ſweet Eliza.

But, the fact is, Pamela, whom I ſuffered not to leave ſchool till conſiderably turned of ſeventeen, from an unwillingneſs to reſide in the ſame houſe with ſuch a tempting creature, during the abſence of my ſiſter,—for what is philoſophy when

when oppoſed to the charms of a captivating young creature defenceleſs, and depending!—Pamela, whom I looked up to as a Wife, not down on as a Miſtreſs, ſoon placed me out of all danger—by the very conduct which would have drawn many in. Her paſſions were alarmingly violent; and luckily for me ſhe had not hypocriſy enough to aſſume a virgin coyneſs. Conſequently, fearful of engaging in a race for life with ſuch a companion, and dreading leſt ſome ſpark ſhould come in contact with her while under my roof, I thought it moſt prudent to ſend her to her aunt, in Leiceſterſhire; where, in the courſe of a little month, ſhe leapt into the arms of a Lieutenant of Dragoons.—They are now in Ireland.

It gives me great ſatisfaction, however, to be able to inform you that the lovely girl fell into good hands. The

Officer, though of no fortune, has very reputable connexions, and bears an excellent character.

As I had previouſly ſettled 200l. per annum on Pamela, in caſe of any accident happening to me, and for the ſake of her worthy father whom we ſhould ever remember with gratitude; that annuity, with her little fortune of 800l. will enable them to live comfortably, and render her of ſome conſequence to her huſband.

I ſhould have told you that Mr. O'Reilley has, ſince his marriage, received a Captain's Commiſſion. I cou. tell you too, through whoſe influence it was obtained.—May they be as happy as I moſt ſincerely wiſh them to be!

I readily anticipate your intorrogatory —"How could ſuch a change have been "effected in little more than two years? "for when I left you, your Ward pro-

"miſed

" miſed to be every thing your heart " could wiſh."

To your queſtion I will anſwer by aſſuring you that two years, at ſo critical a time of life, is the moſt portentous period of a woman's exiſtence. For I will venture to aver that, of the whole ſex, nine-tenths of them impreſs a ſtamp of character, between the age of fifteen, and ſeventeen, which is very ſeldom materially altered, whatever viciſſitudes they may experience, or however momentous the proſpect of a change may be.—But I will endeavour to ſolve the enigma.

Know then, my dear Hervey, that on the return of Pamela to ſchool, after her long holy-days, ſhe found her Governeſs newly married to the dancing-maſter,—a young—good natured—well made man.

Now, although the happy couple were

as

as prudent as moſt new-married people generally are, yet Pamela, being what they call a parlour-boarder, (that is, a ſcholar conſtantly at the table, and fire-ſide of the Governeſs,) could not avoid perceiving looks, geſtures, and ſignificant ſqueezes, which might very naturally excite a warm idea in an expanding mind. Nor could it be expected that, in ſuch caſe, a warmed imagination would be fanned into coolneſs by any trifling relaxation of reſtraint which might obtain, in the dancing-room, from a conſciouſneſs of the maſter being one of the family.

Inconſiderable as ſuch circumſtances may appear to thoſe converſant with the buſy world, they are, believe me, of no ſmall conſequence in the eyes of young creatures, on the eve of diſtinguiſhing the nature of the difference of the ſexes; and who, immured from the varied ſcenes

ſcenes of ſociety, have ſo very few objects to amuſe them.

But whatever influence ſuch remarks might have had on the mind of Pamela, it was increaſed in no ſmall degree, by the arrival of a lady of but little more than her own age, who was introduced to her, by the Governeſs, as her companion and bedfellow. The lady was no other than Miſs Glyb, of Salſont; who, after having attended the revellings at the jovial wedding of her brother, had made choice of Mrs. Cotillon's ſchool for the completion of her education.

None of the Glybs are remarkable for taciturnity, you know, or for delicacy of expreſſion; and as Miſs Dolly has a fund of loquacity far ſuperior to any of the family, you will naturally conclude that ſhe was not very backward in her communications to Pamela: Nor, from the nice obſervations made by the young lady,

lady, and a favourite maid, during the whole of the carouſals, which, by the bye, were truly bacchanalian, could there be a dearth of ſubjects. Some of them were of a curious nature, indeed, and as curiouſly came to my knowledge; for, on the return of Pamela to the park, accident, aud accident only, placed me in a ſituation where I was compelled to hear ſuch a ſtory about their nocturnal ſubjects of converſation, that, had I fifty girls, not one of them ſhonld remain at ſchool after fourteen; nor even until that age, unleſs each of the elder girls were paired with one much younger,—and that the Governeſſes were antiquated maidens, or contented widows.—Not a man ſhould reſide in the houſe, even though he were a prieſt of three-ſcore.

Your inquiries after Miſs Woodford were received in a manner highly flattering. Indeed, I am inclined to think that

that the intelligence of your ſafety has induced one of the loveliеſt of her ſex to remain ſome time longer in this wicked world—from whence, in ſpite of all her delightful vivacity, ſhe ſeemed, till very recently, to be retreating moſt rapidly. Yet none, but our family, entertained the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion of the cauſe; for

——— "She never told her love,
"But let concealment, like a worm i'th bud,
"Feed on her damaſk cheek."

And after having been perſecuted with an infinity of potions—anti-hyſterical, hypochondriacal, cachectical, and phthiſical, the, whole neighbourhood was rendered inconſolable, by the diſorder of their deareſt patron being declared—beyond the reach of medicine.—Shallow pated mortals!—Eliza Woodford, who

—— "Sat, like Patience on a monument,
"Smiling at grief."——

Could

could have told them that the fault was not to be attributed to want of efficacy in the medicines, but to the abſence of the only Phyſician who could preſcribe them with ſucceſs.

That ſuch an Eliza ſhould have ſuch a brother! You will hardly credit me, Hervey, when I acquaint you that Sir Charles is returned from the Continent a complete coxcomb;—profuſely extravagant; and, if I am not very much miſtaken a ſentimental hypocrite! But how ſhould it be otherwiſe? When he was permitted to ſelect his own travelling Tutor; and made choice of a man whoſe principal recommendations were abject ſervility, and a dangerous knack at diſſimulation!

On his arrival, I made the baronet a viſit; when declaring how much rejoiced I was to ſee him, after ſo long an abſence, he very gravely aſſured me he was equally happy.—

"Thoſe,

"Thoſe, my dear Belfield," ſaid he, "who do not rejoice at meeting an old "friend, after having been ſeperated "four long years, are unworthy to par-"take the delights of ſocial converſe; "and are poſſeſſed of ſouls but ill adapted "to the attainment of felicity either "here, or hereafter."—Yet I could plainly perceive that I was, at that juncture, an unwelcome gueſt.

In the courſe of our ſhort converſation I aſked him if he had not found travelling, near the ſeat of war, very inconvenient as well as expenſive?

"Yes, my dear friend. But the man "who cannot in ſuch ſituations, and un-"der ſuch circumſtances, reſtrain his "expences within the limits of his re-"ceipts, merits the ſcorn of every per-"ſon of common prudence; and ſhould, "by no means, be ſuffered to rank with "men of principle."—And yet, I am

well informed that he is ſome thouſands in debt already; nor, from the confuſion of improvements, as he calls them, which are to be completed with all poſſible diſpatch, can it be long before he will be indebted—many thouſands more.

I called again yeſterday, and had been with him but a few minutes when Mr. Menage, with a ſuperb charger fully capariſoned, was announced.—

"Are you for the army, Sir Charles?"

"The yeomanry-cavalry, Sir. For "when the ſafety of our Conſtitution, "and our holy Religion is at ſtake, what "man of martial ardor can ſit ſupinely, "and behold thoſe ineſtimable jewels "raviſhed from us by the unhallowed "hands of abominable atheiſts?"

"Bravo! Sir Charles. And as Major "Brune is too much indiſpoſed to con-"tinue longer at the head of our neigh-

"bouring

" bouring corps, it will, no doubt, be " proud to be commanded by Sir Charles " Woodford."

" O no!" (And the Baronet ſighed moſt ſignificantly ;)—" I have not the " vanity, Sir, to deem myſelf adequate " to a command of ſuch conſequence : " Not but I have endeavoured to render " myſelf tolerably converſant in tactics : " and, whilſt on the continent, received " lectures on that branch of the ſciences, " from ſome of the moſt eminent Gene- " rals there.—For who could be near " the ſeat of war, gentlemen, and not " imbibe a thirſt for glory !"

" Well puſhed Sir Charles !" thought I ;—for Menage is riding-maſter to the corps, and ſupplies it with horſes :—Of courſe, will feel it his intereſt to labour hard for ſo excellent a cuſtomer.

We had reached a part of the lawn where Sir Charles is building an exten-

ſive riding-houſe, when perceiving that he wiſhed to have Menage to himſelf, I took my leave—after having promiſed to attend him on his firſt viſit to Sir Harry Somerville on Monday next.

I am fearful, my dear Hervey, that I ſhall give you but little ſatisfaction by ſending you my opinion—as to the politics of Europe.

The ideas of our politicians are exceſſively gloomy, and their ſentiments harſh —ſevere—illiberal! Unlike to former wars, when a ſyſtem of neutrality was practicable, there can now be but two parties; and the ſmart pungency of the acid, uſually enliveling our debates, is now wholly abſorbed in the nauſeous acridity of the political cauſtic alkali.

I cannot give you a more perfect idea of our illiberal furor than by ſending you a file of the favourite papers of each party. In the one you will find that the

Rights

Rights of Man is the only ſolid, and ſupportable foundation on which ſyſtems of political governments ſhould be erected; and that Kings and Princes, —not elected by the people—are ſelf created rulers—parents of undue influenc, and promoters of taxes. In the other you will ſee that the ſyſtem of the Rights of Man is a viſionary Incubus,—raiſed by diſaffection, and nurtured by atheiſm.—-That without Kings, and Princes, we ſhould be involved in all the horrors of anarchy, and become the prey of every furious demagogue, who could bawl out liberty with the ſtrongeſt pair of lungs.

Whether both parties are right, or in an error; or whether a ſyſtem might not be ſelected from the dogmas of each, which would tend to ameliorate the ſituation of Europe, cannot now be determined; becauſe there is not one perſon

competent to draw the line of diſtinction —for none are uninfluenced!—Meanwhile, the great diſpoſer of events ſmiles indignant at the rancour of mankind, and ſays—"What I will ſhall be done: and "only when I will ſhall it come to paſs."

I had much more to communicate, but as the packet ſails to-morrow I ſhall be barely in time. I will therefore content myſelf, for the preſent, with repeating my parting admonition,—that although I conſtantly cheriſh the idea of your doing your duty, as the guardian of your men, and a valiant ſoldier; yet I ſhould deem you highly reprehenſible were you to lead them to hazardous exploits, or ruſh on ſuch yourſelf, merely for the ſake of becoming conſpicuous.—There is a wide difference between the parental caution, as well as inflexible courage, eſſential to a Britiſh Officer, and the puſillanimity of a poltroon, or the infuriaſm

of

of a maniac.

Recollect, my dear Hervey, that I have a large fortune; and reſt aſſured that I will never tie it up from the aſſiſtance of a brother. Should you not amaſs ſo much as you may deem neceſſary, be not uneaſy on account of Eliza; for, if I do not err much in my calculations, Sir Charles will ſoon reconcile himſelf to ſomebody leſs than a lord for a brother in law;—nay, will be proud of you. In the mean time I will keep an eye on him, as well for the ſake of his amiable ſiſter, as for yours.

Your mother has written a long letter:—So has Caroline. You may form a tolerable idea how ſincerely I wiſh you to receive them with all poſſible diſpatch; but you can by no means conceive with what ſincerity, and eſteem, I am,

My dear Hervey,

Yours, moſt affectionately,

Lionel Belfield.

LETTER II.

Miſs Harriett Somerville to Miſs Nettlethorpe.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

IF the gaieties of Brighton,—the buſtle of the races,—the ſplendour of reviews, and a houſe full of company, have not deprived you of your whole poſſe of faculties, liſten to the wonderful news of your wondering Harriett.

Either I dream—and I truſt my dear Letitia will believe me when I ſeriouſly declare that I moſt fervently hope I do not;—either I dream, my friend, or I have made a conqueſt of—ſuch a man!—

No

No other perſon, I aſſure you, than Mr. Belfield of Over-range park !

It is not more than two hours ſince he himſelf declared to me (while handing me from the boat in which we had been angling on the lake) that, although he had caught the greateſt number of fiſhes, I had much the advantage in point of weight, as one of mine would outweigh an hundred of his. Conſcious of mine being much inferior, even in ſize, and expreſſing my ſurprize at his aſſertion, he gave me to underſtand that I had abſolutely caught—him !

Such a confeſſion, though made but in jeſt, would have commanded a curteſy, you know ; I, accordingly, dropt one very low indeed, and acknowledged myſelf peculiarly fortunate as I had not heard the ſlighteſt report of the lake containing *John Dories* before.

Mr. Belfield ſmiled at my fiſhmonger compliment

compliment, and vowed that—but the fiſh ſeems to be running away with the line—rod—angler, and all! I will therefore endeavour to collect my floundering ideas, and try to render my ſtory methodical, as well as comprehenſible.

Let me tell you then, my ſweet friend, that a month ago, this very day! we were all thrown into a prodigious buſtle by a viſit from Sir Charles Woodford, of Turretville, and this very Mr. Belfield.

Sir Charles, you are to learn, is juſt returned from the Continent, and waited on my father to remind him of a promiſe which he had given to the late Sir Henry, relative to ſupporting his ſon whenever he choſe to ſtand for the county. A vacancy, it ſeems, is expected before the next meeting of parliament, therefore he caught the earlieſt opportunity of paying his reſpects.—In ſuch caſes, you know, couſin, time is precious.

My

My father was highly delighted with his viſitors, and embargoed them, as he calls it, that is, detained them for three days, though little leſs than their firſt introduction to us.—Their ſiſters, both Charlotte, and I, have long been acquainted with.

Sir Charles, whom, until his late viſit, we had not ſeen for ſeveral years, but who was then a very ſmart youth, has not improved by tranſplanting: the comely and candid countenance of the indigenous plant ſeems to have ſuffered conſiderably by foreign culture.—But, that I may avoid all appearance of detraction, I will leave his portrait for the pencil of my ſiſter, as he has formally declared himſelf her humble ſervant; and proceed to a ſketch of—my prize of the lake—Mr. Belfield.

Firſt, then, for the back ground, my dear.—There we will place the eſtate of Over-

Over-range park, worth ten thouſand per annum at preſent, and, at the expiration of ſome leaſes, improveable to half that amount more; with about 50,000l. in caſh, and ſome pretty things in Ireland:—a very handſome back ground for the portrait of an admirer, let me tell you. Then you are to obſerve the outlines of a man perfectly well ſhaped, and genteel,—ſomewhat above the middle ſize. To theſe add the contour of a fine—oval—animated countenance, with eyes that ſeem to read the very ſoul, yet beam all the ſoftneſs of ſympathy and benevolence;—take all theſe, my dear, and you have a faint reſemblance of Mr. Belfield.

I could readily have heightened my picture, and very conſiderably too, about the forehead—the noſe—the mouth—the cheeks—the chin, but that I feared my Letitia would have ſent me a ſketch

ſketch of myſelf, in return which might not have been ſo flattering as thoſe ſhe has hitherto indulged me with. Juſt ſo —no, not juſt ſo, but far ſuperior to what I have deſcribed, appeared Mr. Belfield to me the firſt moment he entered the room; and his figure is not leſs amiable now, than on his firſt arrival, I aſſure you.

I have hitherto coincided with you in opinion that love at firſt ſight hardly ever occurs; but that the dangerous paſſion which is generally ſo denominated is not worthy of an epithet a tittle better than that of—*caprice!* A paſſion it is, however, that frequently aſſumes a very ſerious aſpect, and, if nurtured by flattery, or impeded by controul, will aſſert ſufficient influence over the mind to urge its victims to the altar; where, having completed his frolic, the vagrant urchin ſhrinks from the conteſt, and leaves his

duped devotees to deplore that depravity of ſentiment which lured them to miſtake the fantaſtical appearance of ſuch a being, for the all-enchanting preſence of the god of love!

Yet, my dear Letitia, you muſt ſuffer me to declare that I think Mr. Belfield and myſelf are examples of ſo rare an inſtance.—What elſe could have urged an attention—an aſſiduity ſo marked with tenderneſs and reſpect in him? And what elſe could have influenced me to receive thoſe aſſiduities with a complacency, which, ſpite of all my diffidence and precaution, did not eſcape the notice of my ſiſter—even the ſecond day?—What could have raiſed an effect ſo immediately reciprocal but love—love—ah, my dear Letitia!—love at firſt ſight? And yet, although I had too much cauſe to apprehend my own ſituation, I would not flatter myſelf that his was abſolute

love

love until the affair of the *lake* authoriſed me to think ſo; notwithſtanding I had heard him aſſure Sir Charles that the qualities of the woman were all he ſought in a wife;—that fortune, when it interfered as an obſtruction to his union with an amiable creature, ſhould be deſpiſed.—And when this was ſaid too, he either did, or I thought he did, caſt a moſt ſignificant glance at me.

But hitherto, my dear friend, not a word has been ſaid to my father on the ſubject; nor has *he* hinted a ſyllable of having obſerved our mutual attentions: however, do not be alarmed on that account;—it is impoſſible for Mr. Belfield to be the enemy of a virtuous woman; and I truſt my Letitia ſtill retains too favourable an opinion of her friend to think her incapable of deporting herſelf, with propriety, in a ſituation which, ſhe is ready to confeſs, is ſomewhat arduous,

if not critical.

When I ſat down to write, I fancied myſelf in high ſpirits, and anticipated a letter that would not only contain novelty, but expreſs a *gaite de cœur* which would prove entertaining to you; yet, I know not how it is, ſighs have eſcaped me, my dear, which I cannot account for, and my vivacity has ſubſided—even to tears.—But the bell announces ſupper; and, if my heart—I mean my ears do not deceive me, I hear Mr. Belfield on the ſtairs, waiting to conduct me to the company.

Adieu, my dear friend! And, as a friend in need is a friend indeed, do not delay indulging me with a line the very firſt opportunity.

Yours, my dear friend,

moſt ſincerely yours,

Harriett Somerville.

LETTER

LETTER III.

Miſs Nettlethorpe to Miſs Harriett Somerville.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

YOUR letter has filled me with anxiety, and the more ſo, as not entertaining the moſt diſtant idea of remaining more than ten days from Brighton, I did not order my letters to be ſent me.—It is now very near a month ſince the date of your letter, and I tremble leſt my anſwer ſhould arrive too late.

Take care, my ſweet friend, take care! You are but young in the tactics of love, yet ſeem already to have learnt the

unaccountable facility by which the conqueror may become the conquered.

Beware I charge you! If ever it be neceſſary to place caution conſtantly on guard over the heart, it is when Mr. Belfield is the beſieger. Not that I deem him dangerous from deficiency of principle; on the contrary, I eſteem him as a man of the ſtricteſt honour, and the pureſt morals; but his figure is engaging—his addreſs faſcinating—his converſation irreſiſtible.

There are few young women, Harriett, but would gladly aſpire at the attention of Mr. Belfield, were they not deterred by the moſt forcible reaſons;—by his avowed determination of marrying ſuch a woman only as ſhall poſſeſs every amiable qualification which can adorn the ſex, and render the connubial ſtate a continual ſcene of felicity;—and by the danger of being incapable of receding, with

with ſafety to their own hearts, ſhould they fail of ſecuring his.

From Mr. Belfield's intimacy with my uncle, when Dean of ——, I, often, had opportunities of obſerving him; nor was I in any danger of ſingeing my wings in his company, as my heart was then fluttering towards the torrid regions, where my ever to be revered Caſtleton was on duty, when——Ah, my dear Harriett! though it is now four years ſince I received the fatal news of the Colonel's death, yet cannot I reflect on the ſweetneſs of his diſpoſition—the brilliancy of his accompliſhments, without feeling the bittereſt anguiſh at his loſs, and an undiminiſhed reſolution to live the widow of his heart.—I am perfectly aſſured, in his contemplation, I was the wife of it.

I am willing to confeſs, my ſweet friend, that the drops which, unguarded, have moiſtened the paper, do not ſtrictly become

become the woman who could only boaſt the ſecret eſteem of Colonel Caſtleton; but convinced of his probity, and confident in his honour, I gave him a ſolemn pledge to be his wife when he returned: —few, therefore, who have loved like me, and like me have experienced ſuch a loſs, will condemn me for thoſe trickling tributes to his precious memory.

It is ſtrange, my dear Harriett, that I could not warn you of impending evils, without repeating ſorrows of my own! but, perhaps, nature might kindly have dictated the digreſſion, that, ſympathizing with me, you may be the more alive to your own ſituation; and the more cautious of falling into afflictions, equally poignant, through any momentary relaxation of your diſcretion.—Equally poignant did I ſay? alas! my love, compariſon is faint, indeed, between the anguiſh of a woman deprived of a deſerving

ſerving man by the unerring ſhaft of death, and her's, who, loſing the object of her affection by ſome little petulance, or levity of conduct, ſees him become the huſband of another.—Ah, Harriett, Harriett! the woes of the widow are placid and ſerene, compared to the perturbations and diſtractions of her who repeatedly feels all the ſorrows of widowhood, every time ſhe beholds the tyrant lord of her heart, and is tortured with the pangs of inſatiate jealouſy each time her frantic imagination conveys him to the arms of her thrice favoured rival!

Having ſaid more than ſufficient to arouſe your attention, I will now, my ſweet friend, enumerate ſome few of the many reaſons which your lover (I wiſh this letter had reached you before I had been convinced he was your beloved alſo) has aſſigned for declining matrimonial engagements with ſeveral amiable girls

girls who now wear the willow.—Whether ſuch reaſons be whimſical, or not, or whether more or leſs puerile, are not points to be conſidered now, ſince it is known that he has repeatedly been influenced by them.

Firſt on the liſt then, Harriett, ſtands filial indifference.—The ſlighteſt diſreſpect ſhewn to a parent eradicates his eſteem inſtantly; for tender to a degree himſelf, he is chilled with horror at a want of tenderneſs in others.

A deportment ſo ſprightly as to border on levity is very obnoxious to him.—Here he conſtantly has Cæſar's remark at his fingers ends; and has alſo ſaid that, being of a placid diſpoſition himſelf, ſhould his wife poſſeſs too great a fund of vivacity, he would be under continual dread, leſt, unreſtrained by prudence, or urged by caprice, it ſhould degenerate into turbulence.

Next on the liſt is garrulity.—He has frequently returned beautiful parrots, merely becauſe they would not be quiet at his requeſt, although remarkably fond of them every where elſe. And here he is backed by an old *ſaw* of my uncles;—"A talkative woman is, to a ſtudious "man, like caſting water on boiling oil; "—it is ſure to overflow, and endanger "the burning of the houſe.

Taciturnity is equally diſagreeable to him.—He would have a wife like a repeater, ſtrike when he pleaſes—and only when it pleaſes him. It is a maxim with Mr. Belfield, as with many others, my dear,—"The woman who ſays nothing "muſt think a great deal;" and ſhould he be guilty of any trifling indiſcretions, his ſoul would be inceſſantly on the rack, leſt they might become the objects of her meditations, and deprive him of her affection.

Intemperance

Intemperance—but intemperance is an object of diſguſt on every man's liſt: for the woman who is not miſtreſs of herſelf will be in continual danger of becoming the miſtreſs of any one, who will humour her foibles, or indulge her caprice. Nor is ſlander a trifling object in the eye of Mr. Belfield; who, ſupported here alſo by my uncle, ſays that, "She who "is addicted to ſlander, will, in caſe of "a momentary dearth of ſubjects, ſel- "dom heſitate to ſport with the reputa- "tion of her own huſband."

I could mention many more, my dear, but will not encroach on time, further than is abſolutely neceſſary. Nor would any one, beholding the plenitude of your perſonal endowments, and not half ſo well informed of your amiability of mind as I am, deem thoſe already enumerated in the ſmalleſt degree neceſſary, if intended as cautions to you; but I, my dear

dear, who am ready to concur with you that Mr. Blifield has "eyes which ſeem "to read the very ſoul," do not conceive that you will deem what I have ſaid impertinent.

I am confident that the tenour of your conduct will merit the applauſe of prudence herſelf: but even you, unguarded, my love, might guileleſſly incur the diſapprobation of one, who, eternally on the watch leſt the foot of a fly ſhould foil his folio of immaculacy, might deem that reprehenſible which would nor attract the attention of others, or, if obſerved, would rather add to their entertainment.

That my ſweeteſt Couſin may elude all the diſagreeables of life, and enjoy felicity equal to her beauty, and her virtue, is (ſhe will, no doubt, readily believe) the fervent prayer of

Her truly affectionate,

LETTER IV.

Mr. Belfield to Captain Belfield.

MY DEAR HERVEY,

CAPTAIN ———, who is to fail with diſpatches for Bengal, and is to leave a packet at Trincomale, is now here, (having taken leave of his family,) and has indulged me with half an hour; I ſhall therefore have the pleaſure of tranſmitting you a line ſome weeks ſooner than I expected.

Your packet arrived the 15th inſtant, and gave us much pleaſure by informing us of your good ſtate of health. And, believe me, Hervey, the pleaſure was not

not a little enhanced by your intelligence that the expedition to ——— was abandoned.

From my knowledge of the force at that place, and the preparations made to receive obtrusive visitors, I never entertained an idea that an attempt could succeed, and am rejoiced, not on your account only, but on behalf of the troops also, that so desperate a plan is laid aside. It is sufficiently melancholy to behold our relations, and friends, hazarding their lives where there is a probability of succeeding,—but to see them pushed on, as forlorn hopes, where there is not a chance of entering the breach, is deplorable indeed!—We have seen too many such expeditions in our western hemisphere, to covet a repetition of them in the east.

I do not doubt, my dear friend, but the compliment paid me in your letter was dictated by the pure impulse of bro-

therly love ; but I have not yet received the new light, Hervey :—I love my King and Country, and venerate the conſtitution too much to pay adulation to any man at their expence ;—you will, conſequently, excuſe your brother if, in this inſtance, he do not follow your advice.

Situated as you are—ſurrounded by men goaded by intereſt, and courting promotion, I am not much ſurpriſed at your avowal of ſentiments differing widely from thoſe which you profeſſed when we parted ; but I ſhould be extremely unhappy were I to learn that you had commenced partiſan in ſupport of your ſyſtem. All parties have ſelf pretenſions to adjuſt before the public welfare can poſſibly claim their attention ; of courſe they are invidous, and, whether *in* or *out*, friends to the conſtitution only when it does not interfere between them and their

their intereſt. Suffer me, then, to hope that you ſtill poſſeſs ideas of independence which will never permit you to drudge contentedly at the fag-end of any party.

Your political opinions, my dear friend, ſeem to have been ſelected from the literary productions of one party only.—Thoſe, to a man who means to confine his eloquence to the two monoſyllables—*aye*, and *no*, are, I am ready to acknowledge, amply ſufficient for his purpoſe; but to one whoſe aim is celebrity, a profound knowledge of the politics of all parties, (with a facile mode of ſeizing on their weak parts, and a happy knack at eluding the efforts of their ſtrong holds,) is abſolutely as eſſential, as to open the mouth. For my own part, I feel an aukward—unaccommodating ſtubbornneſs about me, ſo baneful to political conciliation, that I am confident I ſhould never ſucceed, even with the *aye* and *no*

gentlemen, though invefied with all that immenſity of power, and influence, which it has, for ſeveral years, been the faſhion, ſo ruinouſly, as well as unconſtitutionally, to conſide to mere mortal man!—Too opinionative, myſelf, to pin my political faith on the ſleeve of any man, I could not behold a want of opinion in others with a look, by any means, adapted to ſecure even their dearly purchaſed aſſent—much leſs their eſteem.

I generally peruſe the moſt celebrated publications of all our political partiſans; for I am not yet blockhead enough to deprive myſelf, or my friends, of the peruſal of a well written work merely becauſe it iſſued from the pen of the oppoſite party.—In too many of them I find liberality of ſentiment ſuperſeded by dogmatiſm;—eloquence by an incomprehenſible jargon;—candour by ſuperciliouſneſs;

neſs; and ſound argument by pedantic rhapſody. But *this* I find they all poſſeſs, and in a moſt dreadful degree,—a redundancy of combuſtible matter, the baleful particles of which, being attracted by each other, will cauſe ſuch violent exploſions as will ſhake Europe to the very centre!

Such being my opinion, Hervey, you will not wonder that I ſhould perſiſt in adhering to my private plan. I have not the vanity to indulge a hope that I could benefit mankind, or even render ſervice to my country, by any exertion of my political abilities; I will therefore patiently await the fiat of *Him*, to whoſe decree all powers on earth, however unwillingly, muſt ſubmit!

By your remarks on the occurrences of Europe, I perceive (as I have already hinted) you pin *your* faith on the periodical publications of one party only. This

This, how violently ſoever you may be attached to men, or to meaſures, is both unwiſe, and unſafe; for, by ſo doing, you not only ſubject yourſelf to continual error, but may lead others into miſtakes which they will not thank you for. If you wiſh to attain a tolerable degree of certainty reſpecting political events, while at ſuch a diſtance from the ſcene of action, I would adviſe you to read the papers of all parties; then, by carefully collecting an average, you may arrange a portion of intelligence, tolerably authentic. I do not believe there is a newſpaper, or magazine, publiſhed, which is ſtrictly impartial; but if I were to ſuffer my credulity to incline to any, it ſhould, certainly, be to thoſe which are not oſtenſibly ſupported for the purpoſe of perpetually peſtering the public with palpable untruths.—A liar is, at all times, a moſt deſpicable character, but the Engliſh tongue

tongue has not an epithet vile enough for him who baſely utters known falſhoods, through the channel of the preſs, for the execrable purpoſe of miſleading mankind.

I had written thus far on the requeſted topic, when the ſervant whom I had ſent to Turretville, returned, with a ſmall note, from Miſs Woodford; the contents, I preſume, you will have in my ſiſter's letter; and as Captain ——— reminds me that he has but a few more minutes to indulge me with, I muſt haſten to a concluſion, but will reſume the ſubject when I have leiſure. In fact, you will be ſurpriſed, that I ſhould have entered ſo largely on ſuch a topic now, when I announce to you that the events of to-morrow will, very probably, determine my fate—whether I ſhall enter the hallowed pale of matrimony, or remain, during life, a ſolitary bachelor.

Yes,

Yes, my dear Hervey, I have at length found a lady, who, after the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny, during an intimacy of two months, meets my moſt ſanguine expectations. Miſs Harriett Somerville is —but you will not recollect the lady, as ſhe left *Toft-hall* two years before I returned from the continent, or you from the college:—you muſt, conſequently, be content to behold her by compariſon. Her form is ſimilar to Eliza's; but, as I always thought that amiable girl ſomewhat too ſlender, the lovely Harriett, by approaching a ſmall degree nearer to the *en bon point*, has attained what, in my opinion, may be deemed perſonal perfection. Her face is the counterpart of Miſs Woodford's,—of courſe, is lovelineſs itſelf. Nor may they differ much in the natural endowments of the mind; but Miſs Somerville having had the important advantage of reſiding, for ſeveral years,

years, under the eye of a diſtant relation,—the biſhop of ———'s niece, who is one of the moſt ſenſible—beſt educated —and moſt accompliſhed women in Europe, you will, I hope, excuſe me if I ſay that, in acquirements, ſhe has an evident ſuperiority:—indeed, the amiable Harriett has a fund of argument, and an eccentricity of idea, which, although perfectly innocent, and, frequently, highly improving, might, in a man, and in theſe ſtrange times too, be viewed with a jaundiced eye.—Thus have I, in a few words, given you a likeneſs of the charming creature who has liſtened with complacency to the avowal of my paſſion, and generouſly confeſſed that her father's commands, in my favour, would not be diſagreeable to her.

I have not yet opened the buſineſs to Sir Harry, (but intend doing it to-morrow,)

row,) ſo cannot inform you what fortune the lady will have,—Not very conſiderable I ſuppoſe, as the elder ſiſter, who is to be united to Sir Charles Woodford, will require the greater portion; for, with the baronet, who, by the bye, has not riſen a tittle in my eſtimation ſince I laſt wrote to you, it is—"no money no Lady Woodford,"—Let him have it then, and welcome; I want it not. The adorable Harriett will bring beauty—good ſenſe—prudence, and a ſweet diſpoſition;—far—far more eſſential to my happineſs, than the addition of fifty fortunes!

I hope Sir Harry will not teaze me about entails, and pin-money, as you know I am a determined enemy to both. I will never put it in the power of one of my children to make genteel beggars of the reſt; nor ſuffer my wife to ſpend thouſands a year independent of my controul.

controul. Pin-money is the connubial devil!—the ſource of all matrimonial evils!—the infernal impulſe that hurries ſo many wives through ſuch rounds of diſſipation,—which generally commence at the gaming table, and too—too often conclude at doctor's commons!

A jointure will be neceſſary; for we ſee ſo many inſtances of filial ingratitude, that no man ſhould think of leaving his widow dependent on the bounty of his children.—This, I intend, ſhall be two thouſand per annum; and, while my ſolicitor's hand is in, he ſhall ſettle the ſame ſum on Eliza, or the wife who may ſurvive you:—there will not, on that account, be any neceſſity for depriving your children of ſo much of their fortune, for an indefinite time.

I had alſo—but Captain ——— hints impatience. Yours ever,

Lionel Belfield.

LETTER V.

Miſs Harriett Somerville to Miſs Nettlethorpe.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

IF my fluttering heart were not too much elated to ſuffer a ſyllable of complaint to eſcape me, I ſhould chide my deareſt Letitia—my moſt ineſtimable friend, for her tedious ſilence; but as I truſt I ſhall have more than one ſatisfactory reaſon aſſigned me for her long delay, I will ſuſpend my murmurs, and ſoftly whiſper to her gentle ear—"your "Harriett has every proſpect before her "of being a happy woman!"

Mr.

Mr. Belfield—the kind—the good—the excellent Mr. Belfield! has this day declared his attachment for your Harriett, to her father, and earneſtly entreated his influence for an early day. Sir Harry is in high ſpirits on the occaſion, and has ſummoned the lawyers to attend him to-morrow; in ſhort, the family is all buſtle, and wears a moſt ſmiling countenance.—Heaven grant no clouds may intervene! But even William, who cannot cut a melon without prognoſticating future events from the characters traced by nature on the rind, and who has almoſt made a convert of my ſiſter;—even William, who ſaw my amiable Belfield's fine face on the waning moon, and, but three days ago, found our hieroglyphics on the oppoſite ſide of a chaſm on one of his largeſt melons;—even he, my dear, is on the eve of abjuring his occult errors, and is actually

muſing on a ſelection of fruit for a deſert at our wedding dinner.

A ſummons to our uſual evening walk on the lawn, compels me thus abruptly to entreat your excuſe until to-morrow, or next day; and haſtily to aſſure you that I am, and ever will remain,

Your affectionate Couſin,

and ſincerely obliged,

Harriett Somerville.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

Miſs Nettlethorpe to Miſs Harriett Somerville.

AH! my dear—dear Couſin! why will you dally with your friend? Why have I not received a letter from you? I am tortured with anxiety, and labour under the moſt diſmal apprehenſions that all is not well with you.

A friend, who juſt now dined with us, informed the biſhop, that as he was croſſing the country, three days ago, he met Mr. Belfield;—that he appeared very diſconſolate,—complained of indiſ-

poſition, ſaid he was going to Ireland, but ſhould ſtop a few days at ———. Struck with the improbability of ſuch intelligence, I could not directly credit it, until the gentleman declared it was impoſſible for him to have been miſtaken, as he well knew Mr. Belfield, having been frequently in his company on the continent.

Good heaven!—relieve my anxiety, my ſweet friend, and write to me inſtantly. Mr. Belfield cannot ſurely have withdrawn his eſteem from you too!—who, if ever woman could lay claim to abſolute perfection, are that brilliant individual! Has he a friend in Ireland ſick, or in diſtreſs?—He has a ſoul all ſympathy, my love, and in ſuch caſes will outſtrip ſurpriſe itſelf!—But that cannot be,—your happy letter, which muſt have paſſed mine ſomewhere on the road,—the intelligence—I know not what to

ſurmiſe,

ſurmiſe, or how to reconcile ſuch an expedition with ſuch an epiſtle. Ceaſe, then, longer to torment me, and let me hear from you immediately.

Your alarmed friend,

Letitia Nettlethorpe.

LETTER VII.

Miſs Nettlethorpe to Miſs Harriett Somerville.

I AM in no trifling dilemma, I aſſure you, whether to chide my deareſt Couſin

ſin for being cruelly dilatory, in not yet anſwering my letter; or, by yielding the conflict to a hoſt of forebodings, haſten to the ſuccour of my beloved friend. I will therefore, however impatiently, await the return of my ſervant, and from his intelligence determine whether to ſcold you, or fly to your relief.

Your truly anxious

Let. Net.

LETTER VIII.

Miſs Somerville to Miſs Nettlethorpe.

DEAR COUSIN,

WHEN I aſſure you that, until the arrival of your ſervant, your exiſtence was not, even thought of among us, you will naturally conclude that our intellects muſt have been ſtrangely deranged; and ſo indeed they have been, madam!

Oh! Couſin; my ſiſter—my poor, dear ſiſter!—that lovelieſt tulip that ever bloomed!—as William uſed to call her, is loſt—loſt for ever! But whether drowned, or murdered, or whatever elſe was her unhappy end, we have not been able

able to aſcertain, as the body has not yet been diſcovered, though the lake has been drawn ſeveral times, and the whole neighbourhood ſtrictly ſearched.

Sir Harry has been almoſt diſtracted; and nothing but the moſt violent reſentment againſt the baſe and ungenerous Mr. Belfield could have kept me in my ſenſes.

You remember, no doubt, Couſin, the letter which my ſiſter exultingly wrote you about Mr. Belfield's propoſals to Sir Harry?—then we were all happy;—now, how ſad the reverſe! The very next morning a gloom was caſt over our mirth by my father, who inſiſted that whatever he gave my ſiſter, a ſum equal to ten per cent. of her portion, at leaſt, ſhould be ſettled on her for pin-money; and that the eſtate ſhould be entailed on the heirs by the marriage; both of which Mr. Belfield poſitively refuſed to agree

to,

to, and the buſineſs was adjourned to the next day.

I might have ſaid—Mr. Belfield meanly and pitifully refuſed, though my ſiſter was of a different opinion; for what is the wife of a man of faſhion now, madam, if ſhe be not enabled to ſupport her conſequence by a ſuitable ſplendour? However, the poor dear creature differed widely from us all, in that reſpect,—"Mr. Belfield will be the lord of all my "wiſhes," ſhe ſaid; "and I am con-"ſcious I ſhall never entertain a deſire "to incur an expence which will not "meet the ready approbation of my "huſband." Sir Harry gave is uſual—"pſha! blockhead!" And I muſt confeſs I could not help ſmiling at her ignorance of the world, notwithſtanding the many opportunities ſhe had of making obſervations, which I never poſſeſſed.

In the evening, Couſin, Mr. Belfield, and

and my ſiſter, walked on the lawn together, as was their cuſtom, when we did not make a party; but returned much ſooner than uſual, and he went home before ſupper. Surpriſed at ſuch conduct, I could not help aſking Harriett what was the matter; who, with a laboured ſmile, declared ſhe could not tell me.—At that inſtant, your letter of the 28th of laſt month was delivered to her. (See letter 3.)

After kiſſing your name moſt fervently, the poor dear girl peruſed the contents, when caſting a look at me which I can never forget,—"Charlotte," ſhe, ſighing, ſaid; "Oh! never flatter your-
"ſelf with the illuſive idea of taſting true
"felicity in this world. And yet, had
"I received this letter one hour ſooner,
"I might have been happy. Ah, my
"deareſt monitor! how will your heart
"bleed for your Harriett when you ſhall
"know

" know that your cautious—kind advice
" arrived one ſhort hour too late! Yes,
" my dear Charlotte, this letter now en-
" ables me to inform you that Mr. Bel-
" field is gone—gone, I fear, for ever!
" Hurt at my father perſiſting in re-
" gulations which the dear man declared
" he could not comply with, but by do-
" ing extreme violence to his feelings,—
" I, in the warmth of ſilly petulance,
" heightened by an unreſerved confi-
" dence, ſuffered expreſſions to eſcape
" me which even I, now condemn as im-
" proper, and which, to another ear,—
" to Mr. Belfield's, might have ſounded
" undutifully.—Am I undutiful?—Do
" we not dote upon our tender parent?
" —Have I ever entertained a wiſh
" which I would have concealed from
" him?—Nay, would he be offended
" were he to hear the words which un-
" happily eſcaped me? Yet, much I

" fear, they ſtruck the heart of Belfield; " and if ſo,"—Here ſhe burſt into a flood of tears, and, begging me to excuſe her to the company, retired to her chamber.

The next morning the dear girl appeared very uneaſy, as Mr. Belfield did not come to breakfaſt, to meet the lawyers,—nor even to dinner. Sir Harry, to appeaſe her, diſpatched a ſervant to the park, with inquiries after his health; who returned with intelligence that he had been walking in the garden, but complaining of a ſlight indiſpoſition, excuſed himſelf from ſitting down to dinner, and retired to his ſtudy.

After a tedious night, Couſin, we aroſe rather early, my ſiſter being anxious to inquire after the health of Mr. Belfield; but, as we were leaving the chamber, the encloſed letter was ſent up by Sir

Sir Harry.—He had juſt looked it over, and ſet off for the park inſtantly.

LETTER IX. *(encloſed.)*

Mr. Belfield to Sir Harry Somerville.

" DEAR SIR HARRY,

" DOOMED, I too plainly per-
" ceive, to endure a ſolitary and unſo-
" ciable exiſtence through a life of celi-
" bacy, I truſt I ſhall rather experience
" your pity, than reproach, when I,
" with anguiſh indeſcribable, acquaint
" you that obſtacles inſurmountable pre-
" vent me from being allied to you,—
" and by a connexion, too, which, but
" for thoſe cruel barriers, would have
" made me the happieſt of men.

"Do not, my dear Sir Harry, attri-
"bute that to inſtability, which is the
"uncontrollable effect of nature. I love
"your amiable—your moſt amiable
"daughter, heaven knows, too well!
"and can ſafely ſay—I will never marry
"any other woman. But ſo inſuperable
"are my preſent objections, with reſpect
"to her, that, were I blindly to at-
"tempt overleaping them, I ſhould be
"inceſſantly tortured by the anticipated
"ingratitude of my own off-ſpring.

"In the bittereſt anguiſh of my heart,
"ſuffer me to implore the bleſſings of
"heaven on your beauteous daughter:
"and to aſſure you that, with my moſt
"fervent prayers for the happineſs of
"you all,

"I am,

"Dear Sir Harry,

"your ſincere, but diſconſolate ſervant,

"*Lionel Belfield.*"

My

My ſiſter read the firſt paragraph very haſtily, and repeating the words—"would "have made me the happieſt of men"—with peculiar emphaſis, gave the letter to me. I read it audibly; and not hearing any obſervations on it,—ſtruck alſo with its ſolemnity, as well as my ſeriouſneſs, I read it over, and over again, ſeveral times; till turning my head towards the bed, I perceived the miſerable creature—motionleſs! Chilled to the very ſoul at ſuch a ſcene, Couſin, I fell, inſenſible, by her ſide; but, ſoon recovering, alarmed the family, and ſent for Doctor ———.

In the mean time, we exerted ourſelves in recovering the lovely mourner, and were ſo happy as to ſucceed; but our joy at ſeeing her revive was ſoon converted into terror;—ſhe bled moſt terrifyingly, from a wound in the arm, cauſed by a pair of ſciſſars! though whe-

ther ſhe fell on them, or I had them in my hand when I fainted, we could never recollect. Luckily, the wound diverted my ſiſter's attention from the letter; and on the arrival of the ſurgeon, I had the felicity to learn it was not dangerous.

Were I writing to any other perſon, Couſin, I ſhould be fearful of fatiguing, and would have ſent a part only of my unhappy tale, at once; but as you have always been ſo very much intereſted in the dear girls welfare, I will detain your ſervant till I can finiſh my narrative.

After the ſurgeon had retired, I became alarmed for the dear creature, who was giving herſelf up to the moſt violent grief, when we were rouſed by the approach of Sir Harry,—thundering up ſtairs, (in his uſual manner, when irritated, you know, Couſin,) and venting horrible execrations againſt Mr. Belfield, at every ſtep, for being ſuch a —— fool

as to pay any attention to what the girl ſaid about *him*. But ſeeing Harriett look very pale—her arm in a ſling too, he was inſtantly huſhed, and liſtened with ſurpriſing attention while ſhe abſolutely ſupplicated him, in the moſt affecting manner, no more to utter imprecations on a man, who, if he acted from the pure dictates of his ſoul, had done that which was right; but if from ficklenefs of diſpoſition, would, ſhe was well convinced, feel the pangs of conſcience ſufficiently keen, without his endeavour to increaſe them.

Sir Harry's chagrin was evident, Couſin; yet dared he not to rage, leſt he ſhould injure his darling child;—at length he ventured to ſay—"But ſurely I may "ſwear he ſhall never have thee, Har- "riett, after trumping up ſuch ſqueamiſh "excuſes for breaking off the match; "for, as he ſays he'll never marry any "body

" body elſe, I ſuppoſe, when he gets " out of his fatherly qualms, he'll be " hankering after thee again. But I'll " be d—d—" he could ſay no more, for Harriett had ſprung from the chair, and placed her hand on his mouth.

" Did he tell you, ſir, that he would " never marry any one elſe?—Where " did you ſee him?—Is he well? O, " ſir! for pity's ſake anſwer me."

" Well!" grumbled Sir Harry; " Yes, egod, he's well enough to fly " the country, and ſcamper nobody " knows where.—No, no, I did not ſee " him; and 'twas well for him I didn't, " for by——well, well, I'll ſay no " more," (ſeeing her hand again lifted up to interrupt him,) " only act with ſpirit, " girl, and do not ſhame thy father."

" But, dear ſir, did you not ſay he " told you he would never marry any " one elſe?"

" Told

"Told me! no, rot him! he never "said a word to me about the matter; "he only says so in the letter."

"Where is it? Ah! where is the "letter?" cried my poor sister; and seizing the paper, which lay behind her, she perused it, very attentively, two or three times over; when, seeming to recollect somewhat, she dropped on her knees before Sir Harry, who was sitting on the bed-side.—

"Heaven knows, my dearest father, "I am not the undutiful child which Mr. "Belfield suspects me to be; and anxi- "ous as I am to make a solemn vow, "yet, will I not presume without your "kind permission."

Sir Harry conceiving she was incensed against Mr. Belfield, on the perusal of his letter, roared out—"Never fear, "girl! swear heartily, and I'll join thee "with all my heart."

"First,

"First, then," ſaid the dear girl, "may bleſſings innumerable attend you "for your goodneſs! And, next, as it "is unjuſt that the offender ſhould be "permitted to retain her choice, whilſt "the offended voluntarily relinquiſhes "his,—hear me, good heaven! while I "ſolemnly avow that I will never give "my hand to any one but Belfield!"

You would have thought Sir Harry was mad, Couſin! He danced about—whiſtled—ſwore——beat the bed-poſts! At length his feelings for Harriett ſurmounted all others, and he went down ſtairs in a tolerable humour; but muttered as he went—"Pretty cozening "this, by ——!—but we'll talk it over "ſome other time, when people are bet-"ter able to hear the advice of their "friends."

To my aſtoniſhment, Couſin, my ſiſter appeared

appeared much more tranquil after having made her veſtal vow,—for it is ſurely ſynonimous! And, except frequently expreſſing an anxiety for Mr. Belfield's ſafety, ſeldom made him the topic of converſation, which, before, ſhe continually did. Nor did ſhe appear depreſſed in ſpirits, even on the receipt of your letter of the 14th inſtant; (ſee letter 6.) although ſhe confeſſed it gave her infinite pain, on peruſing it; and, what was very extraordinary, ſhe, for the firſt time in her life, committed it to the flames without ſuffering me to peruſe it. On the contrary, ſhe often appeared even cheerful, and gradually improved until the evening of the 24th, which being the eve of her birth-day, ſhe was deſirous that the ſervants ſhould be regaled with ſome of her ale—as ſhe called the beer which was brewed the ſame week ſhe was born. Then, indeed, though

though the reſt of the family were in very good ſpirits, ſhe ſometimes appeared dejected, and ſhed ſome tears. Nor can I forget that, on retiring to reſt, ſhe repeatedly kiſſed Sir Harry with peculiar fervour.—Sad omen of her deſtiny!—'twas the laſt time ſhe was to kiſs her father!

On the morning of the 26th, Couſin, I did not wake until near eight o'clock. In fact, the whole family ſlept very late—in conſequence of drinking the ſtrong ale, I ſuppoſe. Miſſing my ſiſter, I readily concluded that, unwilling to diſturb me, ſhe had dreſt herſelf ſoftly, and had gone to indulge her meditations, as uſual, on the lawn; when, juſt as I was dreſſing, Sir Harry knocked at the door, and aſked if all were well, as the houſe had been robbed.

So confident was I that my ſiſter was on the lawn, it never once occurred to me

me to mention her:—I was wholly inquiſitive to learn what had been ſtolen. Sir Harry ſoon informed me that Harriett's parlour window had been broken, and her bureau opened, from whence he miſſed her piſtols, and a purſe containing a hundred guineas, (half of which ſhe had intended to make her nurſe a preſent of, on her wedding day;)—that her letters were thrown about the room;—and that the clothes of the gardener were ſtolen, as alſo thoſe of a youth of Sir Charles Woodford's, who had brought me a letter the preceeding evening, and whom I had detained all night.—Yet, what was very aſtoniſhing, the butler's pantry—the very next room, was never entered.—"But what ſays Harriett to the loſs "of her *pops*, and her purſe;—No more "target-ſhooting now, to ſee which is "the beſt markſman!" My ſiſter then ruſhed on my mind, and I trembled ſo

much with preſentiment that I did not dare to inquire after her. Sir Harry, alarmed at my appearance, opened the curtains, and not perceiving his Harriett, half uttered—" Where's your ſiſ—" his agitation convinced me that ſhe had not been ſeen ;—I ſhrieked with apprehenſion, and fainted on the floor.

On recovering, I learnt that Sir Harry very ſoon left me, and, in a paroxiſm of terror, ran all over the lawn and gardens, calling his Harriett—his beloved Harriett ! but no Harriett could be found, madam ; nor could any tidings of her be obtained throughout the neighbourhood. At length the diſmal idea of her having been murdered by the robbers occurred, and the lake was immediately drawn ; when, under the ſummer-houſe window, her clothes were found, tied up in the gardener's handkerchief, and ſtones put amongſt them to make them ſink the more

more readily!—but ſtill no Harriett, madam. We then ſearched the wood which adjoins to the garden, where we diſcovered William's clothes, ſcattered about in ſtrange confuſion, which led us to ſuſpect *that* as the fatal ſpot where the murder had been committed; but not the ſmalleſt appearance of blood was to be perceived, nor could we find a piece of ground newly broken up, where ſhe might have been interred.

Hitherto, madam, no tidings of my poor dear ſiſter, have been obtained, and we remain in an irkſome ſuſpence as to the mode of her unhappy end, though we all agree in opinion that ſhe muſt have been murdered:—for, having found her clothes ſo curiouſly tied up, we felt ourſelves juſtified in acquitting her of yielding to a momentary impulſe of diſpair, and effecting her own diſſolution.

Sir Harry's grief was exceſſive—too violent to be of long continuance, as his conſtitution could not have ſupported it. He now admits ſome intervals of conſolation; and, encouraged by his laſt night's dream, has, this morning, attempted to conſole us all, by indulging the fond hope that he yet ſhall ſee her again.—I, alas! madam, cannot glean a ſingle grain of comfort from ſuch viſionary deluſion: conſequently, deplore the loſs of a moſt amiable friend, and ſiſter, who, I have too—too much cauſe to apprehend, is gone for ever!

Though the poor dear creature is beyond the reach of comfort from the ſympathizing tenderneſs of ſo kind a friend, Sir Harry, and I, ſtill ſtand in no ſmall need of it: ſhould you, therefore, ſummon up ſufficient reſolution to indulge us with your company, you would confer an

an ineſtimable obligation on,

Dear Madam,

Your moſt affectionate Couſin,

and much afflicted humble ſervant,

Charlotte Somerville.

LETTER X.

Mr. Belfield to Mrs. Belfield.

MY DEAREST MADAM,

REGNARD, of whom you entertained ſo high an opinion,—who received ſo many obligations from you, (to ſay nothing of what I have done for him,) left me, very abruptly, this morning. His pretext for quitting my ſervice ſo precipately was, that there being a veſſel in the port, bound for Leghorn, and an old acquaintance of his going thither, he was induced to take advantage of ſo favourable an opportunity, from a ſtrong deſire to ſee his parents.

I moſt ſincerely wiſh the motive aſſigned may not be fictitious, becauſe ſo truly laudable; but am ſorry to ſay, I have my doubts about it; for he very ſeldom mentioned his parents to me, although it is ſo long ſince we left Florence; and whenever he did, it was only to exclaim againſt them for abandoning him to the wide world, when they were well enabled to provide for him themſelves. Nay, I even heard him ſay to Sir William ———'s valet, that he hoped I ſhould call again on my return,—ſo little did he think of quitting me, only nine days ago! I am rather apprehenſive that his countryman (who was recently diſmiſſed Lord L——'s ſervice, on a ſtrong ſuſpicion of peculation) has rouſed ſome latent paſſions in him, which may prove fatal if indulged; and I ſhall rejoice heartily to hear of his arrival, and being reconciled to the family.

Will

Will you permit me, madam, to beg of you to ſend Robert to me, if you can conveniently ſpare him: but if taking him from his preſent ſituation will be attended with the ſmalleſt regret on your part, I beg you will not think of it, as I can readily ſupply myſelf here.

I entreat you to accept my thanks for the punctuality with which you ſo kindly adhere to my requeſt. I am not yet prepared to hear a ſyllable on ſo delicate a ſubject, ſo muſt beg to be beholden to you for a continuance of your ſilence, on that head,—till I requeſt your communications.

My old acquaintance, Major ——— is quartered here, and a ſet of very agreeable officers he has the honour to command. I am not mad enough to attempt drowning my cares among them, but I frequently find it neceſſary to recruit my ſpirits in their company; and

it

it gives me pleaſure to inform you that, in ſome degree, I have been ſo fortunate as to ſucceed.

With fervent prayers for the amendment of your health, and increaſe of your happineſs,

I am,

My deareſt Madam,

Your faithfully affectionate,

and moſt devoted ſervant,

Lionel Belfield.

LETTER XI.

From the ſame to the ſame.

MY DEAREST MADAM,

I Should not have troubled you again ſo haſtily, had I not to inform you that I have no occaſion for Robert; being already, very agreeably provided,—and I truſt my choice will meet your approbation.

I ſhall now take the opportunity of communicating ſome of my adventures. —They croud apace upon me, madam. The firſt, of any conſequence, which occured yeſterday morning, was perfectly comic:—that, of the evening, commenced

menced very ſeriouſly, but concluded moſt fortunately. What others I may be deſtined to, heaven only knows!—If they do not cloſe leſs pleaſantly than thoſe of yeſterday, I ſhall have no reaſon to complain.

Not to keep you in ſuſpenſe, madam, I will, without preface, inform you that, while dreſſing myſelf yeſterday, previous to dining at the meſs, my attention was drawn to the next room by a very curious diſcourſe between a woman, with a very maſculine voice, making love in very bad French; and a man, with a very effeminate voice, evading the ſubject, with the utmoſt politeneſs, in very good. The woman ſoon became extremely importunate, and the man, evidently uneaſy; which induced me to take advantage of a crevice to behold the ſcene. When, lo! madam, I obſerved the bar-maid, a robuſt woman of thirty,

thirty, forcibly ſaluting a little Frenchman who could not be more than eighteen! He had been at the hotel but a very few days, yet had already captured the hearts of half the *fair* in the houſe.

The youth (who had tempted the *lady* by the fineſt ſet of features I ever ſaw, though his complexion was very brown,) ſeemed ſo much alarmed that I had the utmoſt difficulty to refrain from roaring with laughter, which would unavoidably have put them to the rout. However, I was ſoon relieved from my riſible impulſe, by obſerving him whiſper the *inamorata*.—She ſtarted from him inſtantly;—ſurveyed him with horror—diſappointment—diſguſt! and wiſhing he had been at the devil before he came into the houſe, ran down ſtairs with the utmoſt ſpeed.

Seeing the young man appear in perfect health, and recollecting the effeminacy

nacy of his voice, I eaſily conceived the magical ſecret which he had communicated; and could not help exclaiming to myſelf,—"Good God!——ſurely there "are not many inſtances of french boys "being degraded for the execrable "purpoſe of tickling the depraved ears "of a faſtidious audience! Happily "thoſe inhuman"——The hair-dreſſer entering, interrupted my ſoliloquy; and by the time I was dreſſed, it had eſcaped me.

Having taken a cheerful glaſs after dinner, the Major, and I, took a walk on the walls, which are as high as the tops of the houſes,—upwards of a mile round; and from which you may behold proſpects delightfully pleaſing, and fancifully pictureſque.

After walking leiſurely round, and contemplating the varied teints of the gaudy clouds, tinged by the ſetting ſun,

which retired with unuſual ſplendor behind the diſtant mountains; and, as it glided by the breaks and chaſms of thoſe ſtupendous hills, indulged us with enchanting glances at varieties of beauties; my friend recollected he had promiſed to accompany ſome ladies to a concert, and wiſhed me to make one of the party; but the evening was ſo ſerene that I declined his invitation;—preferring the pure air on the walls to the mephitic vapour of a crowded room. I, therefore, took a ſaunter by myſelf, and enjoyed it to ſuch a degree, that I did not think of retiring until the evening was far advanced,—ſo delightful was the ſituation; and ſo much did it coincide with my diſpoſition!

At length I approached one of the ſtair-caſes which communicate with the ſtreet; but had not deſcended more than two ſteps when I received ſo violent a ſtab

ſtab with a ſtiletto that, my coat being providentially cloſed, and the weapon having as providentially ſtruck one of the buttons, it flew from the hand of the aſſaſſin. Almoſt at the ſame inſtant, I received a blow, with a ſtick, from another villain; but that not bringing me to the ground neither, they both ruſhed on me, and were dragging me up the ſteps, when the report of a piſtol cloſe to us alarmed them.——They fled with the utmoſt precipitation, and one of them complained of being wounded.

I very ſoon recovered from the dizzineſs cauſed by the ſtroke of the ſtick, and, looking round me, perceived the identical little frenchman, who was the ſubject of my morning's adventure, ſtanding cloſe by me, with the piſtol in his hand. The brave little fellow ſeemed very much agitated;——hoped I had received no material injury; and was

extremely happy that he had been ſo fortunate as to contribute to my preſervation.

As it grew very dark, the place was ill adapted for long compliments; I, therefore, thanked him briefly, and requeſted him to accompany me to the hotel.

When I had ſat myſelf down, and reflected for a moment, I became more and more ſenſible of the danger, which I had, almoſt miraculouſly, eſcaped; as, from the aukward attempts of the aſſaſſins to hide the Italian accent behind an Iriſh brogue, I have not a doubt, my dear Madam, but Regnaud and his companion were the villains. Conſequently my obligations to my little friend were continually enhanced; and I earneſtly entreated him to ſup with me, that I might have an opportunity of learning how I could beſt beſtow my thanks.

This

This he positively declined. "He was "already amply recompenced by the "pleasing reflection that he had been "enabled to serve me in so critical an "extremity;——was at present unpro-"vided,—unprotected; and, hearing that "my servant had left me abruptly, he "had often been tempted to make a "tender of his faithful services, but "conscious of his inability, his resolution "had as often failed him. But should "the issue of the late adventure have "the smallest influence in his behalf, he "should look upon it as the happiest "moment of his life; and be proud to "devote the remainder of that life to "me." Charmed with my preserver's sensibility, and delighted at the fervency of his desire to serve me, I readily accepted his offered service; and, if first appearances do not now deceive me, I think I shall have no cause to repent of

the very ſtrong prepoſſeſſion which I already entertain for him.

Fearful that your ſatisfaction at my having eſcaped ſo ſerious a conſpiracy would be conſiderably diminiſhed, whilſt you had reaſon to apprehend that the villains were in the neighbourhood, I made inquiries this morning concerning them; and can inform you, to a certainty, that they fled on board their ſhip immediately on the failure of their attempt,——Regnaud's companion complaining terribly of having fallen down, and cut his arm.—The ſhip ſailed at ten o'clock laſt night; and the pilot returned home about two hours ago.

I have now to entreat you, my dear Madam, to ſuffer me to inſiſt, that you will not add to our diſagreeables by chiding yourſelf for placing confidence in an ungrateful villain. Recollect,

Madam,

Madam, it is very ſeldom that your penetration has deceived you; or that you have raiſed a good opinion on a ſlender foundation. Regnaud's conduct was very little ſubject to your inſpection, therefore was it much eaſier for him to elude your diſcriminating eye, than to eſcape ſuſpicion from me, who had him continually about me, and frequently obſerved him in his unguarded moments. But had not your good opinion of him determined me, I might ſtill have kept him, though my ſuſpicions had been ſtronger than they were;—ſo much do I diſlike changing my ſervants. To this let me add, I already feel more agreeable with my preſent valet, though not ſo expert, than ever I did with Regnaud, in the courſe of five years. I am, then, to thank you for your amiable prejudice, Madam, ſince it proved ſo fortunate a medium for my little frenchman to introduce

troduce himſelf under ſuch favourable impreſſions.

That your health may daily improve, and your heart never endure a pang from any unguarded conduct of mine, is the fervent prayer of,

Deareſt Madam,

Your faithfully affectionate,

and devoted ſervant,

Lionel Belfield.

P. S. Should Robert have incurred any expence in equipping himſelf for my ſervice, I beg you will be ſo kind to thank him for his aſſiduity; and reimburſe him—with intereſt.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

Miſs Somerville to Miſs Nettlethorpe.

DEAR MADAM,

YOUR letter of the 8th inſtant, informing me that the cauſe of your not complying with my requeſt is owing to indiſpoſition occaſioned by my melancholy letter, gives me the greateſt uneaſineſs; eſpecially as the advice of ſuch a counſellor was never more requiſite to me than at this juncture. Fervently hoping that this may meet you much recovered, permit me, dear Couſin,

to

to entreat a ſmall portion of your attention while I unburthen my mind of a load which is extremely irkſome.

I muſt inform you then, madam, that Sir Charles Woodford had ſo far ingratiated himſelf in Sir Harry's good opinion, by his refined ſentiments, and flattering encomiums on me, aided by repeated aſſurances of having the honour of introducing me to their Majeſties, as a Peereſs of the realm, before the concluſion of the next ſeſſion of parliament; that he actually advanced him the twenty thouſand pounds (my portion) before the marriage articles were ready, on account of ſome great eſtate, with I don't know how many boroughs belonging to it, which he pretended was, at that moment, to be ſold, and would be ſnapt up in a minute. Whether ſuch eſtate was really to be diſpoſed of or not, I am not certain; but certain I am that Sir Harry advanced

advanced him the money; and as certain am I that he loſt every guinea of it at ——— races!

Ill news generally flies on falcon's wings, you know, Couſin. The intelligence ſoon reached our houſe; but I was lucky enough to intercept it before it got to Sir Harry.

Sir Charles affected an air of unconcern when, on his return, I told him I was not ignorant of his loſs; but notwithſtanding his ſeeming indifference, I caught him biting his lips; and received a look, which plainly told me that I ſhould not pry into his concerns with impunity.—"It was rather unfortunate "to be ſure," (he acknowledged,) "but "he had ſecured the eſtate, notwith- "ſtanding; and, under the ſeal of ſe- "crecy, would inform me that ſo much "of his ſiſter's fortune, which he ſhould "borrow for a few months, would fill up the

" the chaſm.—That the dignity of the " family was intereſted; and in ſuch caſe, " what ſiſter would not cheerfully ſubmit " to a temporary dimunition of her in- " come, eſpecially when ſhe knew the in- " violable honour of her brother would " not ſuffer him to be happy for an in- " ſtant, until he had replaced it—with " tenfold intereſt!" But not a word of the marriage articles was mentioned all this time, although they were ready for ſignature; yet, before his race excurſion,—before he had got the money, I mean,—he was continually execrating the lawyers for retarding his happineſs:—a happineſs ſo vaſt, in his idea, that he could not think of ſuffering the loſs of my beloved ſiſter to delay it more than two months!

The next day he came much later than uſual, and, while at dinner, Sir Harry, after reminding him of the ſacri-

fice

fice to his ardour which he had compelled us to, jocularly adviſed him to make a hearty meal, for that matters were ready for his execution.

Sir Charles no ſooner received the memento, Couſin, than feigning himſelf almoſt choaked, and appearing to recover with great difficulty, he complained of being much indiſpoſed, and went home immediately!

Do not deem me harſh, Madam, for ſaying—"feigned himſelf," for I am confident he did ſo. Nay, ſo very lamely did he play the counterfeit, that, inſtead of feeling for his ſituation, it was with great difficulty, I could refrain from laughter; and had I not been anxious to keep Sir Harry from ſuſpecting the deception, fearing to plunge him again into diſtreſs, I ſhould, poſitively, have taxed him with hypocriſy, on the inſtant.

I cannot ſay that the perſon of Sir

Charles is diſagreeable to me, but I ſhould not ſpeak truth were I to ſay I eſteem him. To have promoted the happineſs of my dear father, I might, perhaps not very unwillingly, have given him my hand; but as appearances now are, I think it would be imprudent, if not unſafe to do ſo. Permit me, then, dear Couſin, to entreat your advice, by return of poſt, whether I ſhould reveal my preſent ſentiments to Sir Harry, or defer ——

I was interrupted by the arrival of a meſſenger from Sir Charles, with a note which will rid me of all apprehenſion of being preſſed on the article buſineſs, until I ſhall have time to receive your favour, at leaſt.

I am, dear Couſin,

Your obliged and affectionate

Charlotte Somerville.

LETTER

LETTER XIII. (encloſed.)

Sir Charles Woodford to Miſs Somerville.

"SIR Charles Woodford's moſt ardent "reſpects ever attend Miſs Somerville "—he is inexpreſſibly hurt to be under "the provoking neceſſity of acquainting "her, that an expreſs from his agent "compels him—but moſt cruelly againſt "his inclination, to haſten to London "inſtantly;—where, he has reaſon to "apprehend, he will be detained ten "days at leaſt! This to a perſon in Sir "Charles Woodford's critical ſituation, "is enough to cauſe diſtraction; but the "urgency of the buſineſs will admit of "no delay.

"Poſſibly this unavoidable retardation "of his bliſs, may, eventually, tend to "the mutual happineſs both of Miſs "Somerville, and Sir Charles Wood-"ford: for, by ſubmitting, with becom-"ing reſignation, to their irreſiſtable "deſtiny,—and how often are we diſ-"appointed, even with the brim of the "cup between our lips!—they may be "deemed the more worthy of uninter-"rupted felicity.

"Sir Charles Woodford flatters him-"ſelf Miſs Somerville will yield implicit "confidence in his aſſertion, when he "ſolemnly aſſures her, that her divine "image will never be a moment from his "imagination."

Poſtſcript

Poſtſcript by Miſs Somerville to Miſs Nettlethorpe.

I perceive I have omitted, in my letter, to inform you, that the gardener, when returning from ——— market, met Sir Charles, within half a mile of Mr. Belfield's ſouth-lodge. This was not going to London, Couſin, but directly from it. Of courſe you will readily perceive what a wonderful degree of faith is to be placed on his proteſtations.

LETTER XIV.

Miſs Somerville to Miſs Nettlethorpe.

I Have a thouſand apologies to make to you, Couſin, for thus haſtily troubling you again; and ten thouſand more for not having been able to contain myſelf until your requeſted letter arrived. But, indeed, indeed, Madam, patience herſelf would have burſt with anxiety, had ſhe been in my ſituation; and, like me, would, I am certain, have caught at the readieſt mode of relieving herſelf.

Could you have conceived, Couſin, that Sir Charles's pompous letter about a journey to London, which he was

" *under*

" *under the provoking neceſſity of informing* " *me of* ;" and which " *in his critical* " *ſituation was enough to cauſe diſtraction*," was, every tittle of it, arrant falſehood ! Could you have believed that, after expreſſing himſelf ſo vehemently,—after having ten thouſand times, d———the lawyers for retarding his nuptials,—— after Sir Harry's blind confidence, and almoſt culpable liberality,—could you have believed, Couſin, that this very Sir Charles had his carriage at the door, waiting to convey him to the feet of Miſs Belfield ? yet, 'tis all true, Madam !

Mr. Menage, who is a great favourite with the hypocrite, and has ſome time, paid his addreſſes to Mrs. Temple (our houſekeeper,) communicated the circumſtance to her, the laſt evening ; and ſhe revealed the ſecret to me, as ſoon as I came down ſtairs this morning.

You

You will readily conceive, that I was not a little vexed at ſuch baſe conduct in Sir Charles:—I was provoked to the higheſt degree. And although he was become perfectly indifferent to me, ſo much did paſſion run away with every effort of prudence, that, fancying Miſs Belfield was a willing party in the affront, I inſtantly ſat down, and wrote the following letter.

LETTER

LETTER XV. (encloſed.)

"*Miſs Somerville to Miſs Belfield.*"

"MADAM,

"AFTER the irreparable injury "which our family had ſuſtained from "the conduct of your brother, I muſt "confeſs I did not imagine I ſhould ſo "ſoon—ſo very ſoon have had to con- "gratulate you on your triumph over "a perſon publickly announced as my "intended huſband; and of conveying, "through me, another ſtab at a tender "father's heart. But have a care, Ma- "dam, the man who now flatters you,

"by

" by proteſting that he is ſacrificing my
" bleeding heart at the ſhrine of your
" beauty, how egregiouſly ſoever he
" may err in that reſpect, may ſucceed
" but too well in ſacrificing your's at
" the ſhrine of another.

" It gives me infinite concern, Ma-
" dam, to aſſure you for the firſt time in
" my life, I cannot with ſincerity con-
" clude myſelf your's."

" *Charlotte Somerville.*"

Having diſpatcht my letter, and indulged my ſpleen by anticipating the pangs which the poignancy of it would inflict on the boſom of Miſs Belfield; I was agreeably ſurpriſed with the receipt of the following note.

LETTER

LETTER XVI. (encloſed.)

"*Miſs Belfield to Miſs Somerville.*"

"HOW could Miſs Somerville, for "a moment entertain ſo unfavourable "an opinion of me, as to imagine me "capable of acting ſo diſreſpectfully— "much leſs ungenerouſly by her! Would "ſhe have done ſo by me? No, my "dear friend, it is impoſſible that either "I, or my unhappy brother, ſhould "poſſeſs a wiſh relative to you, or your "worthy parent, but what tends to your "felicity. Do not then, again, think "ſo injurioufly of us.

"With

" With reſpect to Sir Charles Wood-
" ford, I do not think it prudent to
" heſitate, even with you, Miſs Somer-
" ville; becauſe the ſooner you are
" appriſed of his conduct, the better you
" may be prepared to counteract it.

" Sorry am I to ſay, that Sir Charles
" was with my mother on Friday, and
" told her a very long tale about his
" infinite regard for my brother, and his
" outrageous regard for me, whom, be
" aſſured, he has not ſeen ſince his re-
" turn from the continent.——That a
" principal inducement to offer his hand
" to you, was the proſpect of my bro-
" ther's union with your ſiſter; and that
" an ardent wiſh ſtill to be firmly united
" with a man of ſuch uncommon wor-
" thineſs, compelled him to ſolicit her
" influence with me in his behalf.——
" With a great number of fine ſenti-

" ments

" ments unworthily proſtituted, and " conſequently diſgraceful to a man of " honour. But, my mother, knowing " my brother's opinion of Sir Charles to " be very indifferent, and being con- " vinced that ſuch duplicity would render " it ſtill leſs eſtimable, ſenſibly affected " alſo at ſuch barefaced illiberality of " ſentiment towards you, my dear, gave " him not the ſmalleſt encouragement; " only coolly referred him to my bro- " ther; nor was he permitted even to " ſee me.

" My own opinion of Sir Charles " Woodford would make you perfectly " eaſy, ſo far as I am intereſted; but, " after what I have already communi- " cated, you will, of courſe, deem that " wholly immaterial.

" With the moſt fervent wiſhes of " felicity to you, and your dear parent,

" I will, and be aſſured with the utmoſt
" ſincerity, ſubſcribe myſelf,

" My dear Madam,

" Your truly affectionate,

" and faithful ſervant,

" *Caroline Belfield.*"

Highly delighted as I was at the ingenuouſneſs diſplayed in Miſs Belfield's letter, that delight was greatly enhanced by reflecting on the exquiſite mortification, which it muſt have given to a man of Sir Charles's conſequence, and paſſionate diſpoſition, to have been treated ſo cavalierly; and I was anticipating the triumph I ſhould enjoy over him, when Sir

Harry entered the parlour.——— "What!" ſaid he, obſerving the letter, "is he already beginning to complain "of—tedious hours,—melancholy days, "—ages of abſence, and ſo forth?" "If "he has any tedious hours, Sir, they "muſt be thoſe which intervene the "preſent, and that—which is to ſee "him at the feet of another woman; "for, I believe, the only thought he has "about me, or you either, is how to get "diſencumbered with decency."

"Ha! ha! ha! my girl;—what art "jealous already? Pſha! hang it! "thou art too ſoon by two months at "leaſt. He cannot be falſe to thee "before marriage you know."

"No, Sir! What do you think of that "letter, then?"—and I gave him the note which I had received from Miſs Belfield.

Sir Harry peruſed the letter ſeveral

times,—looking at me, then at the paper, —alternately. At length, after I had been anxiouſly expecting one of his vociferous paſſions, he took me by the hand, and with a calmneſs that aſtoniſhed me—tears trickling down his cheeks,— "Charlotte!"——and his ſigh pierced through my heart;—"ſurely, my dear "girl, we were born to meet vexations! "Crimes, and puniſhments, have gene- "rally followed pretty cloſely upon the "heels of each other in our family, "and here they are at it again. I have "thought fifty times, that I did wrong "in ſuffering myſelf to yield conſent to "your being married ſo ſoon after the "death of my dear—dear Harriett; and "now, I ſee, I am to be paid off with "intereſt. But what does the girl ſay, "doſt love him?——*Wilt* be unhappy, "Charlotte, if he forſake thee? Speak, "tell me ſincerely, my dear.—D—— "him!

" him! I'll ſhoot the *dog*, though he " have a thouſand lives.——I'll have a " life for every guinea he has cozened " us out of.—Here, Tom!—Charles!— " Why, what doſt ſay, girl?——Why " doeſn't ſpeak?"

I began to be alarmed for Sir Harry, as one of his raving fits is ſure to confine him for ſeveral days, and, with much earneſtneſs, entreated him to wait the event with patience; aſſuring him that ſo far from being unhappy at Sir Charles's proceedings, I rather rejoiced at them, as I ſhould now enjoy the felicity of remaining undiſturbed, and devoting my time to his pleaſure, and convenience.

Sir Harry claſpt me to his breaſt, Madam; and after ſobbing heartily at his diſappointment, promiſed calmly to wait for a fortnight; when, if Sir Charles does not return the money, the law is to compel him to do it.

Sir Charles is actually gone from home, for ſome days; and if (knowing the ſilence, which has prevailed between the families, ſince the loſs of my ſiſter,) he ſhould be hardy enough to call, I truſt you will not condemn me, if I attempt to make him ſuitable acknowledgements for the obligations evidently intended to have been conferred on us.

With moſt ſincere wiſhes for increaſe of health to you,

I am, dear Madam,

Your affectionate Couſin,

and faithful humble ſervant,

Charlotte Somerville.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

Mr. Belfield to Captain Belfield.

MY DEAR HERVEY,

YOU have frequently ridiculed me for the moral, tranquil ſyſtem which I had adopted, and have repeatedly endeavoured, with all your eloquence, to allure me from the paths of peace, and rouſe me into gallantry, that you, and your *bon vivants* might have the joyous ſatisfaction, of entering me in the ſanguinary liſts of modern honour, and of initiating me in the ſhameleſs arcana of unbluſhing

unbluſhing intrigue. I now—yes, Hervey, I now can rank with the moſt diſſolute; and the hardieſt of your companions may hail me with Io Pæans, as little leſs than a murderer, and an abſolute libertine!

I am ſo much aſhamed,—ſo mortified at the buſineſs myſelf, that I had intended to have kept even you ignorant of it; but as no entreaties could prevail on Major ———, our old ſchoolfellow, to decline writing you an account of the *glorious rencounter*, as he perverſely calls it, I muſt compel myſelf to the taſk, however diſagreeable, leſt he, by exaggerating circumſtances, which he ſwears are ſo *honourable* to the Belfield family, ſhould make me appear, if poſſible, more culpable than I really am.

But, firſt, I muſt inform you, Hervey, and be aſſured I do it with moſt heartfelt regret, that the connexion, which I vainly

flattered

flattered myſelf I was on the eve of entering into, is unhappily fallen through. The lady, truly lovely as ſhe is, poſſeſſes ideas relative to filial duty incompatible with mine, and I have to deplore the misfortune, eſpecially, as I did not perceive that deficiency in her excellence—compleat in every other reſpect!—until my heart had committed itſelf too far, I fear, ever to recede ſufficiently to permit me to enter the connubial ſtate with any other. I moſt ſincerely wiſh, that the charming woman may have met my apology for withdrawing myſelf, with much leſs chagrin than I experienced; but on that head I am totally ignorant, and have implored our dear parent to keep me ſo,—for ſome time at leaſt.

From the park, learn then, my dear Hervey, I went to ——; but by very ſhort ſtages, for my heart bled at every ſtep I advanced. Nay, it had often the

preſumption

preſumption to accuſe me of faſtidiouſneſs, and ſtood its ground with a degree of plauſibility which alarmed me; however, filial piety at length ſurmounted all the obſtacles thrown in its way, and I arrived, arrogating no ſmall conſequence to myſelf, I aſſure you, for the invaluable ſacrifice I had made.

You, my dear friend, may probably call this a mad expedition; and cenſure me for relinquiſhing the pleaſures of our family,—my friends,—and the loveliеſt woman that ever my eyes beheld, to run abroad in ſearch of adventures. It is very ſeldom that I differ with you on ſubjects ſo ſerious, and, believe me, it is with unfeigned ſorrow I do it now; but I would rather be hailed the moſt frantic Quixotte that ever attacked a windmill, or invaded a potent empire with a ſingle fiſhing boat, than be deemed an abettor of filial ingratitude.

What

What adventures may yet be reſerved for me are ſhut up in the volume of fate; thoſe I have already experienced, during this ſhort ſtage of my peregrination, have borne a very formidable aſpect, but will, by no means, ſtand the teſt of reflection.

I had not been at —— above a week, when I very narrowly eſcaped the ſtilettoes of Regnaud, and an atrocious accomplice of his. From this conſpiracy I was preſerved, in the very act of aſſault, by a brave little frenchman, who now occupies the place of that aſſaſſin.

Is it not ſtrange, my brother, that when either of the ſexes preſume to eſtimate the moral mind of the other, they ſhould err, ſo very far, in their calculations! Few women of good ſenſe are at a loſs to appreciate the moral virtues or vices of their own ſex, even on a ſhort acquaintance; why then are they

they ſo frequently ſubject to error in their computations on our's ;—and vice verſa.

We all know that fate has fixed in the human ſpecies a very ſtrong partiality for the oppoſite ſex : this is attributed to our corporeal ſenſations. But, although little noticed by philoſophers, there is alſo a partiality totally diſtinct, particularly in the ſofter ſex, which we frequently ſee, yet ſeldom attend to ; or, if we do, it is a thouſand to one but, on our parts, the obſervations are illiberal and unjuſt. Woman, if left to her free choice, will, ſetting aſide every idea of ſexual deſire or protection, ſeek the converſation of man in preference to that of her own ſex ; nor will ſhe heſitate to woo his partial attention, though ſhe may be going to a far diſtant region the very next day, and be morally certain of never ſeeing him again. Siſters generally prefer the company of their brothers,

though

though they are confident the boys are the favourites of the parents, and that their fortunes muſt be injured by ſuch prepoſſeſſion. Theſe, in my opinion, are evident proofs of a mental partiality in the loveliеſt ſex. Of courſe, then, as the heart inſtigated by our corporeal ſenſations will readily admit as a welcome gueſt an object totally unworthy ſuch a ſituation; ſo may our mind hoodwinked by prejudice, relax from its wonted precaution when one of its own ſex is the object of ſcrutiny, and ungardedly become the dupe of ſome obſequious intruder, whom thoſe of its fellow ſex would behold with ſuſpicion,—perhaps with horror.

We, Hervey, were not deceived in Regnaud. You, in particular, caught a glance of his mind's eye almoſt immediately: how then could our mother, be ſo far miſtaken, as not only to ſee no ill

in him herſelf, but even to lull ſuſpicion in me?—Pardon—dear Madam, pardon me, ſhould you ever ſee this letter; nor entertain a ſurmiſe that I hint a murmur. No, my dear parent, your partiality was natural;—in favour of a foreigner too, who had laboured to convince you that he was friendleſs, and devoted to poverty by the parents, who ſhould and could have ſheltered him, it was truly amiable. And, be aſſured, Madam, I would rather ſee you deceived an hundred times, when honouring unworthy objects with your good opinion, than hear that prejudice had influenced you to withhold your eſteem from an individual in diſtreſs, and in the ſmalleſt degree worthy your humane conſideration.——But, to my adventures.

On the 19th Inſtant, be it remembered to my ſhame, I dined with Major ——, and his officers, at the meſs. As the Major

Major was engaged to take tea with an eminent Solicitor, a few miles from the place, dinner was ordered on the table at two o'clock. He had inſiſted that I I ſhould accompany him; being certain that he could cure my ſpleen, as he called my lowneſs of ſpirits, by introducing me to "the fineſt girl I ever "ſaw."—Alas! he knew very little of Harriett Somerville!

Moſt of the gentlemen being prepared for an afternoon ride, on account of dining ſo very early, and the day being ſo very fine, we had little time to ſpare; conſequently the glaſs circulated briſkly.

Among the officers preſent was a fine looking young fellow, who had joined the corps only ten days, yet was, already, become truly formidable to the whole place, as well as to the regiment. He was of athletic mould,——near ſix feet and a half high,——a true Connaught

hero! having killed his dozen,—been as many times arraigned for manſlaughter, and as often having hectored his jury into——"not guilty!"

This formidable perſon, I ſhould have told you, was quartered at the hotel, where I reſided; and had offended me grievouſly the preceding day, by giving abuſive language to my preſerver, only for politely declining to convey a note for him to a conſiderable diſtance, at the very inſtant that he knew I was waiting to be dreſſed! But, as my diſpoſition was ever averſe from quarrelling, you know, I did not think it neceſſary to notice the affront. The hero, therefore, finding me ſo placable, was reſolved to rouſe me into action, by venturing ſeveral expreſſions which I had been wholly unaccuſtomed to; but which I alſo declined reſenting.

Being, at length, informed of our deſtination,

deſtination, he opened all the batteries of ſatire on me; and not only laboured to make me the object of ridicule with the company, but was raſh enough to uſe ſeveral unwarrantable expreſſions relative to the lady's reputation. Theſe I could not conceive were intended as premiditated affronts to me, ſo, very innocently, began to complain to Major ———, for wiſhing to introduce me to ſuch a woman. But the hero, not yet prepared to quarrel with his commanding officer, diſclaimed every idea of offending him,——declaring that as his diſcourſe relative to the lady was addreſſed ſolely to me, I was the only perſon who ought to vindicate her honour—if I thought it injured.

It was impoſſible for me longer to remain in ſuſpenſe as to his intentions; and the Major having ſolemnly averred that the lady was, in his opinion, a wo-

man of the ſtricteſt honour,—I felt myſelf impelled to cenſure them. Warmed, therefore, with wine, and irritated by reſentment, I told him that ſo far as I only was concerned, he was extremely welcome to all the entertainment he had both given and received; but from what the Major had averred reſpecting the lady, he had not ſpoken as every gentleman ſhould do, when a woman of honour is the topic of converſation. The train was already laid, ſo but a ſmall ſpark was neceſſary to create an exploſion; accordingly a young gentleman who ſat next to me received the contents of a glaſs of claret in his face, which the rude aſſaulter preſumed he ſufficiently apologized for, by aſſuring the gentleman it was intended for me.

Heaven and you, my dear brother, know that I ever abhorred the infamous practice of duelling, but ſtung to the quick

quick as I then was, I haſtily exclaimed —" unmannerly ruffian!" and was inſtantly told that if I did not wiſh to be chronicled a poltroon, and kicked in the ſtreet, I ſhould follow him that moment to the meadow. His own piſtols were always ready. Thoſe belonging to the Major were but too handy! I put them in my pocket, and away we poſted;—he, ſure of his man;—I, ſo ſtupidly incenſed as to be incapable of thinking of any thing.

A few minutes brought us to the place of rendezvous; and a brace of piſtols was fired by each of us with no other effect than making holes in our clothes. The Major and Captain ———, our two ſeconds, then interfered; when, ſtill an enemy to duelling, I told them I was not only ready, but ſhould be happy to receive an apology from my antagoniſt. A very courſe expreſſion was the only reply,

reply, and, on the next fire, the ball of my piſtol diſplaced four of his teeth, and forced its way out of the mouth through the cheek. This brought my hero to his ſenſes;—convinced him he was no longer invulnerable; and ſo thoroughly cooled his ſanguinary paſſion, that he, with very little difficulty, acknowledged himſelf culpable, and begged I would in future rank him in the liſt of my friends.

The mouth of Captain Kilmain bled profuſely; and we were conducting him towards the gate next the hotel, when the bells, beginning to ring, on the congregation quitting the church, announced to us that we had been attempting to commit murder not only on the ſabbath-day, but in the actual time of divine ſervice! A thunderbolt could not have had a more inſtantaneous effect than the bells had on me. I was petrified for ſome minutes, when ſtarting from the wound-

ed

ed man, I beheld him with emotions of ſhivering horror: nor could I refrain from loading the ſeconds with terms of the keeneſt reproach, for ſuffering us to add ſuch flagrant impiety to an act ſufficiently iniquitous, even under exiſting circumſtances the moſt extenuating. In fact, I was faſt verging on delirium, when the ſurgeon, who had been ſent to with inſtructions to follow us inſtantaneouſly, made his appearance, and, with the aid of Captain ———, took charge of my newly acquired friend; while the Major, really alarmed at my ſituation, took me by the arm with an intent of turning into ſome private path, where he might have an opportunity of attempting to ſooth me into calmneſs.

As the Major, like many of the gentlemen of the army, was not of the moſt religious turn of mind, he began to juſtify the execrable tranſaction, by attributing

buting the whole of it to fortune.—
" That the *glorious rencounter* had, moſt
" probably, relieved hundreds from the
" dreaded inſults of Captain Kilmain, as
" he had not a doubt but the pain expe-
" rienced during the cure of ſuch a
" wound would render him more cau-
" tious of offending, and leſs liable to
" ſport his challenges on forced conſtruc-
" tions of the harmleſs ſallies of others.—
" That if fortune determined the *pleaſing*
" *event* ſhould take place on that day,
" it was my duty to acquieſce in her
" decrees. And that I ought rather to
" rejoice that I had been ſelected as the
" favoured inſtrument of the juſt chaſ-
" tiſement, than murmur becauſe it did
" not happen at two o'clock, or ſix,
" when the people would have been at
" dinner, or at tea."

" Gracious Heaven!" I exclaimed, unable longer to contain myſelf; " are

" we

" we not deſerving of exemplary puniſh-
" ment? Have we not violated—moſt
" heinouſly violated the laws of nature—
" of morality—of religion? Is not Cap-
" tain Kilmain commander of a company
" of ſoldiers, every one of which it was
" his duty, as, no doubt, it would have
" been his inclination, to have brought
" to a court-martial, had he ſeen them
" only intoxicated on the ſabbath-day,
" —much more ſo, had he ſeen them
" fighting—and in time of divine ſervice
" too? Was it not his duty to have ſet an
" example of peace, order, and ſobriety,
" —aye, and of religion alſo, to his
" brave comrades; and not to have in-
" duced a relaxation of thoſe amiable
" and neceſſary virtues by ſo ſhameful a
" dereliction of them all himſelf? Am
" not I in the Commiſſion of the peace?
" —I am!—I am! Would I not have
" ſet any man in the ſtocks who had ap-
" peared

" peared diſguiſed with liquor on a ſab-
" bath-day, whatever excuſe he might
" have urged for ſuch impiety? Would
" I not have committed to ſome ſolitary
" cell the irreverent peaſant, or mecha-
" nic, who, inſtead of paying the tribute
" of duty due unto his God, ſhould pre-
" ſumptuouſly have incurred the guilt of
" a breach of the peace during divine
" ſervice? Would I not, from my pe-
" culiar deteſtation of the practice of
" duelling, have rejoiced to commit any
" man to the county jail who had wound-
" ed another in a duel?—Good God!
" here have I been guilty of all theſe
" crimes—and in a moſt atrocious degree,
" yet, becauſe I have not abſolutely
" committed murder, and am a perſon
" of ſome conſequence in the eye of the
" world, I ſhall be ſuffered to roam at
" large, and vaunt on in my career with
" impunity. But, ſhall I not be hooted

" by

" by that populace, whom I would ſo
" readily have puniſhed?—Shall I not
" be ſhunned by the polite, and avoided
" with horror by the reverend miniſters
" of the holy religion, at which I have ſo
" much offended?"——

All this while we continued walking; and my agonized mind depriving the Major, as well as myſelf of the power of immediate recollection, we, on a ſudden, found ourſelves on the walls of the town, and were, in an inſtant, ſurrounded by many of its reſpectable inhabitants, ſeveral of whom had been eye witneſſes of the rencounter!

Good God! my heart throbs even now at the remembrance of the horrors I endured at that awful criſis! I would have given millions to have been a league from the place, and poſitively gaſped with anxious dread of being overwhelmed with their revilings; when the lady of

one of the principal magiſtrates, addreſſing the Major, in ſome meaſure relieved me.

"My dear Major! we are all of us "under the greateſt obligations to your "valiant friend" (dropping a moſt conciliating curteſy to me,) "for having "quieted your Drawcanſir ſo very op- "portunely.—I vow and proteſt, ſir," (addreſſing herſelf to your bewildered brother,) "it was dangerous for a wo- "man of character to walk in the ſtreet "at noon day; and no gentleman, if "he wiſhed to avoid inſult, or the being "involved in a duel, could preſume to "venture out of doors in the evening, "unleſs in a carriage. In ſhort, ſir, "but for the *providential* iſſue of your "*heroic* interference, I really believe we "ſhould all have abſconded the place in "another week. But, ſurely, ſir, you "muſt have found him a moſt terrific adverſary!

" verſary!—I vow he looked like a *gi-*
" *ant*; and took ſuch ſtrides, when he
" fired his piſtol, that I was horridly a-
" larmed for you. And, really, ſir, it is
" a kind of *miracle*, that you ſhould have
" eſcaped his heatheniſh fury.—Don't
" you think ſo doctor?" ſaid the lady to a corpulent clergyman, ſtanding near her; who, with aſſumed dignity, replied—

" The race is not always to the ſwift,
" nor the battle to the ſtrong, you know,
" madam.—How are the mighty fallen!
" has been exclaimed before to day."
" Gallant gentleman!" whiſpered a lady. " Charming fellow!" ſimpered another.

" I am ſure we are all inconceivably
" beholden to the brave avenger of in-
" ſulted maidens," ſaid a ſpinſter, near fifty; " for I declare I never ſaw Cap-
" tain Kilmain but he made me ſhudder."

" —Would you believe it, Soponiſba?" (to a country couſin,) " the great, big " monſter was near ſeven feet high!"

" I could ſwear," ſaid an arch looking gentleman, " that the boiſterer fright- " ened my daughter ſo ſhockingly, by " thundering out a volley of Iriſh oaths " at an old ſoldier, as ſhe was riding by " him the other day, that ſhe has " ſcarcely recovered herſelf yet. And," turning to me, " I ſhould be proud, ſir, " to defend you, by way of puniſhing " the bluſtering bravoe; but as it would " be impoſſible for any one to ſwear who " fired the firſt ſhot—the piſtols went off " ſo exactly together,—I dare ſay he'll " not venture to commence an action for " the loſs of his teeth, when he would " be ſure of getting jaw-locked with a " non-ſuit,—ha, ha, ha!

Aſtoniſhed, as I was, to find all my anticipated revilings thus vaniſh before praiſe

praiſe and commendations, my ſurpriſe was ſtill increaſed when the Major hailed the friendly advocate, and informed him it was ſolely to puniſh Captain Kilmain for ſpeaking diſreſpectfully of his daughter that the duel was fought. The lawyer, evidently tickled at the idea of his daughter being the object of ſo ſerious an affair, graſped my hand with the utmoſt fervency, and ſwore he was heartily obliged to me. "Not but the girl is well "worth fighting for, ſir; as ſhe is the "fineſt girl in all the world; and will be "proud to thank you—*in propria perſona.*"—Then, as it was too late, at that hour, to think of going to his houſe to tea, he inſiſted on us dining with him on the morrow; which the Major, after very little heſitation, undertook to promiſe him we would do.

Whilſt the dinner treaty was adjuſting by the ſolicitor and his friend, the ladies

ſo idolized me, that I was, more than once, inclined to think I ſlept, and dreamt I was the Grand Seignor, ſurrounded by the beauties of his ſeraglio, each anxious to obtain a ſmile ſublime. The men, too, were nearly as warm in their expreſſions as the women; for the Captain had been a terror to them ever ſince his arrival. In ſhort, I do not know an individual preſent by whom I was not careſſed—for having broken the ſabbath, and premeditatedly ſhot a fellow creature, when I ſhould have been at church; unleſs I may mention a little gentleman who grinned a ghaſtly ſmile, or two, at the encomiums ſo profuſely laviſhed on me: but as the company looked on him as little better than a methodiſt, and ſomewhat related to the family of Iſcariots, very little attention was deigned to his remarks, unleſs to laugh at the demureneſs of the evangelical *prig*,

—as

—as they called the gentleman, when his back was turned.

Flurried—dreadfully flurried by my late conduct, and apprehenſions, and vexed at my flatterers for ſhewing ſuch marked indifference to religion, and morality, my mind again became unſettled; ſo I prevailed on the Major to aſſiſt me in eſcaping them, and hurried to the hotel.

On making our inquiries, we learnt that Captain Kilmain was ſo much compoſed as to have fallen into a ſound ſleep; I, therefore, took leave of my friend, and retired to my chamber. There a new ſcene took place which, though ſhort, was very intereſting to me, and evinced that I had had my lucid intervals whilſt going to the ground; though they muſt have been but momentary, as I had totally forgotten every circumſtance.

I had been in my room a few minutes only,

only, and was contemplating the countenance of L'Amie, my valet, wherein I fancied I ſaw dejection at my miſconduct, and ſatisfaction at my eſcape, ſtruggling for predominancy, when Major ——— returned—with my pocket book in his hand! Expreſſing great ſurpriſe at ſeeing the book in his poſſeſſion, he informed me that I had given it him whilſt walking towards the meadow; and requeſted that, in caſe any accident ſhould happen to me, he would give it to my valet;—that L'Amie ſhould convert the notes to his own uſe, but haſten to my mother with the book;—that he ſhould aſſure her, although I had forgotten the ties of morality and religion, I ſtill retained the moſt perfect gratitude for all her tenderneſs, and bleſſed her,—my dear ſiſter, and the amiable Charlotte Somerville, with my lateſt breath.

The emotions of gratitude in poor L'Amie,

L'Amie, on hearing that I had left him the contents of my pocket-book, were ſo violent as, for ſome time, to deprive him of utterance. He threw himſelf at my feet,—preſſed my hand, and gave me ſuch a look that my very ſoul ſympathized with his, and, but that I was reſtrained by the preſence of the Major, I verily believe I ſhould have hugged him to my heart. The faithful youth obſerved my embarraſſment, and ſoon relieved me. He aroſe,—bowed ſubmiſſively, and thanked me for my kind intentions, but ſincerely hoped he ſhould never ſurvive me, to experience their effects.—Strange! that a perſon ſo young in my ſervice, ſhould have already gained ſuch hold on my eſteem. But was he not my preſerver? Of courſe, ſhould claim my warmeſt gratitude;—my gratitude! I am an enigma relative to this valet of mine! I feel an increaſing

increaſing regard for him almoſt every time I ſee him; yet, whenever he is buſied about my perſon, I experience an aukwardneſs of ſenſation truly unaccountable, and which, if it do not ſubſide as our intimacy increaſes, will really make me unhappy.—Can you explain this riddle? Do, my dear Herver, while I take ſome reſt, for I have poſitively written myſelf to ſleep.

In continuation.

AFTER tumbling and toſſing about until the keenneſs of my reflections, at my execrable conduct, had nearly ſtung me into a fever, I fell into a profound ſleep juſt as Major —— called to take me to

to ſupper. Luckily, L'Amies having obſerved my ſituation, prevailed on him not to diſturb me then, but to breakfaſt with me on the morrow;—and I ſlept till morning.

When I awoke I found myſelf much compoſed, and reſolved to take the firſt ſtep towards obtaining remiſſion of the vengeance of Heaven, for the flagrant ills of the preceding day, by making a moſt ſolemn, and I truſt unalterable re-reſolution never, on any pretext whatſoever, to diſgrace my country, and debaſe my own nature, by daring to ſupercede the laws, and preſumptouſly attempt the deſtruction of a fellow creature with all his ſins upon him—unnumbered—unattoned,—though even cuſtom itſelf, will cancel the offence, and—wonderful expiation! reſt perfectly ſatisfied with a few cant phraſes only.

On riſing, my firſt inquiry was after Captain

Captain Kilmain, of whom I received the moſt favourable intelligence.—He had ſlept undiſturbed,—was doing very well,—there was every probability of a ſpeedy cure. "Thank God! thank "God!" I exclaimed, with tears of joy in my eyes; "what would have been "my feelings—my torments had I de-"prived this man of life?—Periſh ho-"nour!—periſh! periſh! if it can only "be preſerved by premeditated mur-"der."

L'Amie, dreading the conſequence, ſhould I encourage melancholy, reminded me of his having requeſted the Major to breakfaſt with me, and ſaid he apprehended he was waiting below ſtairs. This anxious inſinuation had the deſired effect. I ſoon became calm, and went down to the parlour, where I found the Major had actually been waiting ſome time.

After

After breakfaſt I, with much reluctance, joined my friend in our uſual walk round the walls.—The ſame fulſome—unhallowed compliments were on all ſides repeated—with aggravation ; but I was ſo happy as very ſoon to eſcape their perſecutions ; and, about noon, we took a poſt-chaiſe, in order to fulfill our engagement with the veteran of the law.

We travelled rapidly for an hour and a half, when we arrived at the foot of a mountain, and aſcending for half an hour, by a winding road of gentle acclivity, we gained a level ſpot of about forty acres, near the centre of which ſtood the elegant villa of our hoſt. We were received with tranſports of ſatisfaction by the man of the law, who, in a few minutes, introduced us to his daughter.

Mr. Rebutter might well tell me the lady was worth fighting for.—Excepting not more than ſome half dozen, I never

ſaw a finer creature; but there was an appearance of ſomewhat which, at our firſt interview, was unfavourable to her. She looked as if ſhe would have ſaid—"How weak is man when I condeſcend "to aſſail him! Soon ſhould you fall at "my feet, but I muſt firſt learn if you "are game worth ſhooting." Miſs Rebutter received Major ———, with a freedom perfectly *en militaire*; but to me, after thanking me in very warm terms for "chaſtiſing the ruffian, who "had dared to indulge his *buffoonery* at "the expence of her honour," ſhe blended her politeneſs with a kind of reſerve, that evidently told me ſhe was on the rack to know if I were worth powder and ſhot.

As there were only two other viſitors a venerable maiden lady—afflicted with the tooth ache, and a young country ſquire, who opened his mouth only to eat and

and drink, and as I, you know, was never a great promoter of converſation,—the Major ſtill leſs ſo,—the lawyer unuſually taciturn, and the daughter on the tenter-hooks of ſuſpenſe, a general langour came over us, and a walk into the garden was propoſed. It is a little *Eden*, to be ſure! as the Major very properly terms it;—laid out in a manner truly fanciful, under the ſole direction of its beauteous reſident. At the end of the garden, fartheſt from the houſe, is a little pavilion, furniſhed in a ſtile ſplendid and elegant,—an enchanting temple! Into this Fane none but favourites of the reſident goddeſs were admitted, as we were given to underſtand; and with an effort of complacency, with a look irreſiſtibly ſeducive, ſhe introduced me; from whence the moſt delightful proſpects that imagination can conceive inſtantly arreſted my attention.

On the right hand the view was limitted by a mountain on the borders of Flintſhire; on which ſtands a magnificent caſile, the ſeat of a gentleman whoſe name I do not now recollect. In front, the whole of Cheſter, and its environs, appeared conſpicuouſly placed for our inſpection; and a variety of ſhips with all their ſails becalmed, floating gently by us, on the glaſſy boſom of the inruffled *Dee*, produced ſenſations truly peculiar. On the other ſide of the river the eye commanded a peninſula extending to the ſea, and for a conſiderable way down, in a ſtate of high cultivation;—the reſt was ſand which looked like burniſhed gold, and on its hills ſtood light-houſes for facilitating the navigation of the neighbouring channels. Beyond this land, the eye attracted by the winding Merſey, carried our attention to various ſcenes—from Cheſter round to Warrington; far beyond which

which our view was terminated by the blue-tinged hills of Blackſtone-edge, and thoſe of Derbyſhire. To the left we were feaſted with a magnificent proſpect of the coaſt of Lancaſhire—o'er the bay, as far as Formby Point; near which a numerous fleet was ſeen laden with produce for the *guilty port*, purchaſed with the blood of thouſands of our fellow creatures, who differ from their barbarous tyrants only by being much more humane, and of a darker complexion.—"O thou luxurious, pampered, cruel "port"! thought I, "were the tears "ſhed by the miſerable victims of thy "rapacious traffic, but collected into a "maſs, they would compoſe a river vaſt "as that which laves thy quays—too li-"berally, while ſuch thy merchandiſe! "If there be another and a better world, "where the good ſhall meet reward, and "the bad be puniſhed according to their

" demerits, what will be thy feelings—
" how will the hearts of thy purſe-proud
" dealers in human fleſh—how will their
" ſouls be harrowed up with agonizing
" dread, when the trumpet ſhall ſound,
" and all thoſe that ſleep be called to
" judgment !—I never think of the exe-
" crable practice of trading in our fellow
" creatures but my ſoul revolts at the di-
" abolical idea, and I am ſure to be hur-
" ried into apoſtrophies."—But to the lady, and the pavilion.

After having indulged ourſelves in a ſucceſſion of rhapſodies at the variety of the proſpects, Miſs Rebutter permitted me to conduct her to the houſe. On aſcending the ſteps I felt a gentle preſſure of her hand, which I could attribute only to a gleam of good opinion in my favour; She having, juſt before, inſpected the valuable watch which my partial mother purchaſed with a two hundred pounds prize,

prize, and kindly gave to me.—" He " who poſſeſſes ſuch a watch ſhould be a " perſon of conſiderable property!" might, very naturally, occur to the mind of a female, who, as I have ſince diſcovered, was continually on the look-out to enſnare a fortune; and, therefore, ſuch a diſcovery could not fail to render me more eſtimable in her opinion.

In the houſe we tarried only to take tea, as the Major wiſhed to get home by the hour of parade; ſo, after receiving an invitation for Wedneſday,—reinforced by the entreaties of the charming girl, we haſtened homewards;—the Major full of encomiums on the place—the hoſt—and the hoſt's daughter; I undetermined as to opinion both of the hoſt, and his daughter; but more than half reſolved to avoid going on Wedneſday, if I could eſcape without offending my friend.

It

It is an old ſaying, Hervey, but not the leſs true for being old, that whenever fortune owes us a grudge ſhe is never long at a loſs to execute her vengeance. On the Tueſday evening I had actually prevailed on Major ———, to ſend an apology to Mr. Rebutter; and was, the next morning, exulting that I had, for that day, eluded temptation, when who ſhould enter the parlour but the Major, and the identical father of the lovely tempter, on whom I had juſt been ruminating! and whom, though I could not help admiring, yet I ſecretly wiſhed to avoid.

Mr. Rebutter had called in order to take us in the carriage with him, and would not be denied. Such a malicious turn of the blind lady's wheel threw all my reſolutions topſy turvy! There was no poſſibility of eſcaping—with decency:

I,

I, therefore, made a virtue of neceſſity, and dreſſed immediately.

Shall I confeſs to you, my dear brother, that, although I had a kind of preſentiment of ſomething which urged me to wiſh I might not ſee Miſs Rebutter, yet, ſo inexplicable is the caprice of man! I could not help indulging conjectures how ſhe would be dreſſed—how look—how ſpeak—how ſhe would receive me? And I will alſo confeſs that, on arriving at the houſe, I was not a little mortified on being informed that the lady was not dreſſed.—"Not dreſſed!" ſaid I, to myſelf; "ſhe muſt be very nice in her "attire, and difficult to pleaſe, to-day. "Perhaps ſhe means to do execution; "I'll be upon my guard," ſo I took a turn in the garden, with the Major, while Mr. Rebutter went to haſten his daughter.

I can

I can poſitively declare, Hervey, that the lady was very far from having caught my eſteem; yet could I not receive the raillery of my old friend, at the diſappointment which he ſwore he ſaw apparent on my countenance, without feeling extremely aukward, and, no doubt, looking very ſilly. Happily, I was ſoon relieved from his ſallies, by the approach of the fair *Remiſs*, who, ſo far from being richly attired, was dreſſed quite plain; but the few ornaments ſhe wore were ſo taſtefully diſplayed, that ſhe appeared more lovely than when firſt I ſaw her; her behaviour, too, was wonderfully improved. She received the Major with her uſual gaiety; but there was a reſpectful attention, as well as an engaging politeneſs, ſhewn to me, that, heightened by the filial reſpect ſhe unremittingly paid her father, made her appear even amiable. In ſhort I became

faſcinated.

faſcinated. What with the delightfulneſs of the ſituation,—the cheerfulneſs of the little party, and a glaſs of moſt incomparable burgundy, my accuſtomed reſerve ſubſided, and a flow of ſpirits ſo unuſual poſſeſſed me, that Major ——— actually caught me, in the pavilion, toying with the goddeſs of the fane, and raviſhing a kiſs from her but half averted lips! For this my friend rallied us unmercifully; and the father appeared not a little delighted at the adventure.

As the Major always made it a point of duty to be punctual to the hour of parade, our viſit could not be of long continuance; but I, now readily undertook to promiſe the lawyer, that we would renew our viſit on the following Sunday, and take a bed with him. This I repeatedly engaged for, yet, when we were getting into the carriage, the lovely ſceptic challenged me to pledge my honour to attend

attend them. I could not help ſmiling, nor yet prevent a ſigh, when I committed my honour accordingly.

" Why," thought I, as we were deſcending the mountain ;—" why ſhould " the pledge of honour be deemed more " ſacred than a plain—ſolemn—verbal " promiſe ? Faſhion cannot ſtamp it with " authority ; for faſhion, ſurely, would " bluſh to ſee her honour ſtand frontleſs, " and erect, in the broad breach of her " veracity. It can, then, be nothing but " a popular ſoleciſm in the ſyſtem of mo- " rality. For, would the man hardy e- " nough to break his promiſe, heſitate " to ſnap his honour too ? Or, if there " be a man, who can pertinaceouſly ad- " here to his pledge of honour, yet will " readily ſacrifice that of his word, is " not ſuch a man a dangerous member " of ſociety ?—Is he not a diſgrace to it ? " Fineſs, then, muſt have aſſumed the

" form

" form of faſhion; as ſharpers, when " they lure the thoughtleſs heir to the " gaming table, charm his attention from " the loaded dice, by the language of " politeneſs, and the habiliments of gen- " tlemen. I never yet forfeited a pro- " miſe ſeriouſly made; and when I do— " may I no longer be confided in! Why " then put me to the teſt of honour?— " But I forget that I have commenced " the *honourable* career—by breaking the " Sabbath, and attempting to murder a " fellow creature, when I ſhould be " praying for health to the ſick, and re- " lief to the widow,—to the orphan, " and to thoſe in bonds. Of courſe, " the pledge of honour from ſuch a be- " ing muſt be a depoſit *ſacred indeed!* " and *much to be relied on!*" Thus thought I; and ſo thinking, uninter- rupted by my friend, whoſe ideas,

he aſſured me, were wholly occupied on a new plan for forming the hollow ſquare, we arrived at the hotel.

On the Saturday, we received a viſit both from the hoſt, and his daughter—the lovely Eve of the little Eden! to remind us of our engagement—upon honour, to dine with them the next day. But my friend having received a letter from the viſiting general, ſignifying his intention of inſpecting his regiment in the courſe of the forenoon—a military ſpecimen of morality, and religion, very honourable, and pious, truly!—we were under the neceſſity of entreating a few hours indulgence, which, with ſome difficulty, though not without re-pledging our honours, and gratuitouſly committing our conſcience into the bargain, was complied with; and we obtained a reſpite until tea time. Thus, the very firſt time I ever ſported my honour, you

ſee

ſee it proved a mere phantom when claſhing with the daſh of a general's pen; and the fair holder of the will-o-the-whiſp was reduced to the alternative—a compoſition, or nothing!—"Let me but "get decently out of this ſcrape," ſaid I, "and, in future," thoſe who will not be content with my word ſhall have none of my acquaintance!

Sunday morning came, and I began to wiſh the poſſeſſor of my repledged honour an hundred miles off, when my valet had nearly made me plead bankruptcy, and make no compoſition at all. —But, as there is now no chance of failing till to-morrow's evening tide, I will defer the remainder of my letter until the morning.

In continuation.

L'AMIE, it ſeemed, had ſeen Miſs Rebutter the preceding day, and expreſſed ſo much anxiety about her, that his old friend, the bar-maid, aſked him with a ſneer, if he wiſhed to put horns on my head. The faithful little fellow then came to me, and, with a faultering voice, and dejected countenance, which made me feel inexpreſſibly affected at his ſituation, he told me that he ſhould certainly be miſerable if he quitted my ſervice; but as his ſole deſire was to officiate as my valet only while I remained ſingle, ſuch deſire he found muſt ceaſe, as he underſtood I was on the point of altering my ſituation.

Really

Really alarmed at the poor youth's diſtreſſed appearance, I, yet, could not without great difficulty, refrain from laughter, on reflecting upon the various ſtories which muſt have been circulated to have given cauſe for ſuch ſuſpicions, and told him, without heſitation, that I looked upon marriage as a ceremony much too momentous to be entered into on ſo ſlight an acquaintance;—that the lady was, undoubtedly, a fine woman, and appeared to poſſeſs a tolerable underſtanding; but that ſhe received only that degree of admiration from me, which ſhe muſt naturally claim from every man who ſaw her.

"How! Sir;" cried L'Amie, with urprize, and impatience;—"is it poſ-"ſible that you could behold the lady "who was here yeſterday, and not love "her?"—did it not occur to you, Sir,

how happy ſo lovely a woman might make you?

"Indeed it did not, L'Amie; and for "theſe ſimple reaſons; becauſe I have "ſeen a woman much—Oh! much more "lovely, whom I once thought—and "ſhall, I believe, for ever think, could "have made me far—alas!—far more "happy."

My eye, at that inſtant, met L'Amie's; and the expreſſion of his countenance, from a ſudden tranſition of extreme melancholy to ſupreme ſatisfaction, gave me ſenſations ſtrangely peculiar, and which I cannot, by means anywiſe ſatisfactory, account for. Conſequently the pledge of my honour became ſtill more troubleſome to me; as I perceived I ſhould experience much more comfort in contributing to the happineſs of a perſon to whom I had, ſo very recently, owed the preſervation of my life, than in adding

ding to his uneaſineſs, by repeating my viſits to a lady, who might not deem the diſappointment of the value of a ſtraw. However, on making my uſual viſit to Captain Kilmain, I, very ſoon, determined to adhere cloſely to my honourable promiſe, and, at all events, pay the debt moſt ſcrupulouſly.

Among a variety of matters, I informed the Captain of my promiſed viſit. He ſmiled, and, being now able to converſe without much pain, bad me be upon my guard in that quarter. Such a caution, from him, too, might make me look a little hurt;—it muſt.

"Do not, my dear Sir," (ſaid he) "imagine I am urged by illiberal motives; or think I can harbour reſentment againſt the lady. No, upon my honour! Sir, I do not. It was I who offended *her*—not ſhe *me*; and,—upon the immortal part of me!—I think I

"ought

" ought to rejoice at our rencounter, as
" I feel it has already given a fillip to
" thought, and will tend to my future
" conduct, as well as to the eaſe, and
" ſafety, of many who may be in my
" company. But the medical gentle-
" man who has attended me the laſt two
" days, in the abſence of our ſurgeon,
" ſeems to poſſeſs a deal of knowledge
" of that family; and ſpeaks of it in a
" manner that fully juſtifies my caution
" —let me aſſure you, my dear friend.
" —To make ſhort of it, Mr. Belfield,
" he ſays that Miſs Rebutter poſſeſſes as
" much coquetry as beauty, and more
" art than wit.—That it is not twelve
" months ſince ſhe, in connivance with
" her father, contrived to trick Sir John
" Daſh out of two thouſand pounds, by
" means of a contract of marriage,
" wheedled from him at an unguarded
" moment,

" moment, and which his friends com-
" pelled him to pay rather than marry
" her."

I told him it was very aſtoniſhing that, if they were ſuch kind of people, the Major, who had known them for ſome years, ſhould not have communicated ſuch conduct to me.

" Oh! to be ſure the Major does not
" think ſuch little occurrences are mere
" frolics, my dear fellow; and, no doubt,
" would laugh heartily at you if you were
" to be winged in a ſimilar manner."

I was going to anſwer him ſomewhat ſeverely, in vindication of my friend, when the medical gentleman entered the room.

After making thoſe ſlight ſalutations, which gentlemen of the faculty generally indulge the viſitors of their patients with, he commenced his indiſpenſible (and from the nature of them, I am inclined

clined to think almoſt invariable) routine of queſtions; when, after pondering a few moments, on the material parts of his patient's replies, he began the chit-chat of the morning.

Captain Kilmain, perceiving that the Doctor did not recognize me, artfully introduced the name of "Rebutter."

"In town yeſterday," ſaid the doctor eagerly;—"ſaw him with the Major "on the walls,—very intent,—ſome "grand ſcheme in agitation, I ſuppoſe. "—Fine girl, Sir," (to me,)—"fine "girl indeed! but fine girls, you know, "cannot always command fine fortunes. "Men marry, now o-days, to mend "their incomes, not to gaze upon their "wives. Immenſe taxes,—treble aſſeſſ- "ments,—voluntary contributions,—ten "per cent income,—an innumerable "train of taxes—in petto, and God "knows what beſides! won't permit a

"man

" man to marry to pleaſe his eye only.
" When an heir comes of age, now, his
" firſt object is,—a wife that will increaſe
" his rent-roll, and enable him to ſupport
" his family in the ſtile of the times.——
" This, Sir, muſt be done, at all events,
" or his neighbours will turn up their no-
" ſes at him ; and ſo, Sir, if he cannot
" get an Angel with a fortune, why, he
" muſt even content himſelf with an He-
" cuba ; he, he, he ! Unleſs he can com-
" mand a ſeat in a certain aſſembly ;
" then, indeed, if he poſſeſſes a ſufficient
" degree of political ſagacity to exclaim
" againſt the atheiſtical, and diſorganiz-
" ing enormities of our natural enemies ;
" and can expatiate, without bluſhing,
" on the increaſing proſperity, and in-
" exhauſtible reſources of his country ;—
" then, indeed, Sir, he may pick and
" chooſe for a wife, as he will be ſure to
" obtain an addition to his income, by

" the

" the magical tranſmutation of his honey-
" ed words—not into wind, Sir, but
" ſhowers of *paper*; he, he, he!—We
" wander from the ſubject, though;—
" will it be a match Captain?"

" Upon my honour! I cannot ſay,
" Doctor. What is the opinion of the
" town?"

" Some ſay a match; and ſome ſay
" the gentleman is very ſhy. Some
" hem;—ſome ha;—ſome ſhrug up their
" ſhoulders; and ſome whiſper ſtrange
" things. For my own part,—I al-
" ways ſpeak my mind, you know,—
" between ourſelves; it will be well for
" the *enamoured ſwain* if it end with a
" pigeon only."

I had hitherto deemed the gentlemen of the faculty, in every town, the lawyers ſtedfaſt friends, fancying that their unguarded tittle-tattle, among the women, was oftentimes the means of incenſing

families againſt each other, and, conſequently, of engendering law-ſuits; but I ſoon diſcovered that my judgment was not infallible, and felt myſelf abſolutely vexed on finding this goſſiper ſo pointed an exception to my hypotheſis; for he ſpoke diſreſpectfully of none but lawyers. However, I reſolved to diſappoint the garrulous diſciple of *Galen*, and convince him that the "enamoured Swain" could eſcape without being *pigeoned*. So, when he quitted his patient, I went in ſearch of the Major, to learn what hour would be convenient to him to ſet out.

Major ——— had not heard any thing of the approach of the General; but was of opinion it would be impoſſible for him to attend me; as, ſhould he arrive within an hour, the day would be too far advanced before the regiment could be inſpected to think of getting there in de-

cent time. He, therefore, inſiſted that I ſhould be punctual to my appointment, and be the bearer of his apology.

We took an early dinner, by ourſelves. My countenance, you know, my dear friend, was ever in uniſon with my heart, and I ſuſpect it muſt have betrayed extreme unwillingneſs to the expedition; for the Major, tapping me on the ſhoulder, cried—"Sdeath! my dear fellow, "you look as if you were going to an "execution, rather than to pay a viſit "to the charming *Angelina*." I ſtammered, and ſtared; and thinking this an excellent opportunity, I introduced the intelligence of the morning. The Major was, evidently, chagrined at my communication; but inſtantly recovering himſelf, he roared out—"What, "ſore yet, Doctor?"—then addreſſing himſelf to me,—

"Why,

"Why, it is not more than ſix "months ſince *Rebutter* proſecuted him, "at the ſuit of a Quack Doctor, for "counterfeiting his grand ſpecific for "the ſpeedy, and ſecret cure of a cer- "tain diſorder; and *did* this pilferer of "emperics for five hundred pounds!—A "little d——d, jacobinical raſcal! "who is never eaſy but when he is rail- "ing at the beſt of men for adopting the "beſt of meaſures. But, ſuppoſing it were "as *Eſculapius* has blabbed it, you ſurely "have ſenſe enough to keep your fing- "ers out of the fire—haven't you?"

The queſtion, put ſo abruptly, ſtruck me dumb. My fingers tingled at it; and I felt my conſequence ſo much piqued, that I anſwered him only by ſaying—"let the event ſpeak for itſelf." Reſolved, then, to be punctual to the appointment, I took an extra glaſs, by

way of ſupplying me with ſpirits on my journey.

The afternoon, though warm, was extremely pleaſant; and the gentle breeze which, aided by the reflux of the tide, enabled the veſſels to accompany me down the river, to the foot of the mountain, gave me a glow of vivacity which I was little accuſtomed to, and could not help exulting at.

As the carriage aſcended, I perceived Miſs Rebutter looking towards it, over the paliſadoes of the garden. Such apparent anxiety flattered me, and I amuſed myſelf with manufacturing compliments, in order to make her my moſt florid acknowledgments for having indulged me with ſo much attention, even until I arrived at the houſe;—when all my fine—conned ſpeeches were rendered abortive, by finding neither hoſt nor daughter, ready to receive me.

A ſervant informed me that his maſter was gone to a cottage in the wood, behind the houſe, on buſineſs of emergency, but would return in an hour:—the lady was in the *ſummer-houſe*, he ſaid, and begged to know if he ſhould acquaint her I was "*come up*;" or if I would walk that way. Reſolved to rally the *Remiſs* for ſo glaring a dereliction of politeneſs, I told him I would, myſelf, inform her; and totally forgetting the Doctor's ſtory about Sir John Daſh having been *pigeoned*, I, heedleſs as a pigeon, daſhed on to the pavilion! I tripped up the ſteps—light as air, with a ſpeech—half complaint—half compliment, ready moulded on the tip of my tongue. The door was not quite cloſed;—I puſhed it open, and was entering; when—Heavens!—what a ſight arreſted all my faculties! O Hervey, Hervey! Is there a man on earth who could have encoun-

tered ſuch a viſion, and not have fallen a victim to his preſumption?

The ſtudious tempter had reclined along a ſofa. Her right hand ſupported her head,—her left, white as a lilly, hung down her waiſt;—her foot appeared to have ſlidden from the ſofa, and had thrown her beauteous form into a poſition that would have rouſed deſires in a woe-worn Anchoret; whilſt the pendent taſſel of a ſky-blue ribband, which wantoned half way down a leg of more than medicean ſhape, might have proved an azure clew to his imagination,—might have urged rebellious ideas, to feaſt on other joys than thoſe he vowed to devote his whole attention to.—Her muſlin robe was adorned with ribbands—the colour of her bluſhing cheeks; for behold! ſhe was awake, Hervey, and could not reſtrain an ingenuous ſuffuſion, when reflecting on the mode ſhe was adopting

adopting to lure the ſacrifice to her altar!—Her handkerchief, which ſeemed diſpoſed with care, performed its deſtined duty to a tittle, and left as much of the enchanting boſom unconcealed as ſerved to fan the flame—already raging.—Her ruby lips diſplayed a dimpled ſmile, that, to an obſerver leſs accurate, might have evinced a ſoul all placid and ſerene, but that the little irkſome twitchings of the eye-lids, which we all have felt when counterfeiting ſleep, and which gave a vivacity to the countenance, (deprived of thoſe faſcinating auxiliaries,) convinced me ſhe was not doſing.

Proſtrate, on my knees, I fell before the tempting beauty, and whiſpered an apoſtrophe to her reſiſtleſs charms.—— Opening her deſigning eyes, the enchantreſs caſt an affected look of confuſion at the little derangement in her dreſs, and haſtily adjuſted it; then, placing

cing an arm upon my ſhoulder,—" O, " Belfield!" " (and ſhe ſighed moſt " bewitchingly; how came you ſo un- " expectedly upon me? But, how- " ever, I am under infinite obligations " to you; for you have awakened me " from a dream, which, had it continued, " muſt have afflicted me to deſtraction. " I dreamt—alas! I dreamt you had " been fighting another duel on my ac- " count, and, having received a deſpe- " rate wound, had fallen into my arms. " Did I not ſob while ſleeping?—Oh! " how my heart bled for you.—' Good " powers!' ſaid I, am I then to be de- " prived of the only man my"—— then ſeeming to recollect herſelf, and to appear half aſhamed of having con- feſſed ſo much, ſhe dropt her head upon my ſhoulder, and ſuffered me to preſs her to my boſom.—I am thus circumſtantial, Hervey, that, knowing

the

the violence of my temptation, you may not deem me more reprehenſible than I really am.

The cunning beauty then withdrew herſelf from my embrace,—chid me for my preſumption, and affected to aſſume a dignity; but blended her reſerve with ſuch alluring tenderneſs that, unable to reſtrain my paſſions, I caught her in my arms, and preſſed her lips with all the fervour of deſire. Concluding the propitious moment was arrived for executing her project, ſhe ſmiled on me, —patted my cheek—frowned a little,—ſmiled again, and archly ſaid—"How "ſoon would all thoſe flames ſubſide "were I but to ſhew you the piece of "paper I was ſcribbling on before I fell "aſleep!" "Impoſſible!" "I cried;" "—I dare you to the experiment."—Smiling ſtill more ſweetly, yet ſeeming

ing to heſitate, ſhe pointed to the table. I ſnatched the momentous paper with one hand,—holding her's with the other, and read,—" I promiſe to pay to An-" gelina Rebutter the ſum of two thou-" ſand pounds, in one month from the " date hereof; or to make her my wife " within that period." The verieſt noodle exiſting might have ſeen the ſnare that was laid for him; I alas! I ſaw only Angelina.—I gazed on her lovely face, then on the paper, and kiſſing her name, exultingly, exclaimed. " And is this your " grand terrific!"—then inſtantly ſigned the contract, and, on my knees, preſented it to her. She aroſe,—curtſied moſt divinely, received my offering, profeſſedly, as a mark of my gallantry and complaiſance; then, folding it up, her eyes ſparkling with triumphant ſatisfaction, ſhe preſſed it to her lips, and placed it in her boſom.

A ſcene unexpected, as well as unintended, (on the part of the fair plunderer, at leaſt,) then took place; for ſtung beyond controul, and envying the valued paper its bliſsful reſidence, I ſtruggled to remove it with all the ardour of conteſted dalliance. A conflict, ſuſtained ſo cloſely, was much too poignant to be of long continuance; nature, too far agitated, ſunk, unable to ſupport the conteſt, and I who had ſo recently been triumphed over, ſoon triumphed in my turn. Ah! Hervey; Ah! my friend; let thoſe who could have reſiſted the tempting beauty,—let ſuch, and only ſuch, preſume to cenſure me for yielding to the fierce delirium, and adding another flagrant act of immorality to the ſable liſt—already much too long!

For half an hour we revelled in elyſium; and the gentle murmurs of the lovely fair one agonized my ſoul with tranſport;

tranſport ; when on the ringing of a deep toned bell, the bluſhing Angelina ſtarted into recollection, and almoſt breathleſs at the thought of the ſcene juſt paſt,—" That bell's for tea !" ſhe cried ; " my father will be here direct-" ly."

The bell which had been rung, I had underſtood, was for the ſole purpoſe of ſummoning the cottagers, in caſe of danger in the night ; never having heard it before, ſo alarming a notice for tea, only rouſed my ſlumbering ſuſpicions, and I could not help regarding it as a pre-concerted ſignal, that the abrupt appearance of the father might not fruſtrate the daughter's efforts to obtain the contract.

We inſtantly retired from the pavilion. Mr. Rebutter met us in the garden. He apologized for his long abſence, and frequently caſt an attentive look

look at Angelina; but obſerving her countenance, which at that inſtant bore evident marks of perturbation, he appeared much diſappointed; until the daughter, forcing a ſmile, gave him the paper, ſaying—" See Sir, what a valu-
" able compliment Mr. Belfield has
" made me!"—The lawyer's features ſoon reſumed the chearful caſt, and thanking me for the honour intended him, he retired in order to depoſit the note in his ſtudy.——Angelina followed—for the oſtenſible purpoſe of getting ſome *freſh tea*.

I had taken up a book—the tragedy of Othello:—The following lines, ſpoken by Iago, ſtruck my attention and I read aloud——

" Who ſteals my purſe, ſteals traſh; 'tis ſome-
thing, nothing;
" 'Twas mine, 'tis his; and has been ſlave to
thouſands:

" But he, that filches from me my good name,
" Robs me of that, which not enriches him,
" And makes me poor indeed."

The fleeting moments of tumultuous pleaſures which I had ſo lately experienced, I attributed all to accident, or, what ſtill more flattered me, to fond partiality, and could not help arraigning the diſpoſition of the Doctor in terms moſt ſevere; but was interrupted by a confuſed buzzing in the paſſage. The door of an adjoining room was opened, and I diſtinctly heard Mr. Rebutter ſay——

" Come in here, for a moment.
" Huſh! I ſay;—he 'll hear us."

" Hear us!" replied his daughter, in an impaſſioned tone;—" you would
" make even ſtocks and ſtones to
" ſpeak."

" I tell you again and again, child, I

" was

" was afraid of being too ſoon. I did
" not think you would ſo eaſily have
" prevailed upon him."

" Prevailed upon him!—yes, he was
" eaſily prevailed upon,———heaven
" knows!"——and I could hear her weep.

" Well, well; ſay no more. Had I
" ſuppoſed you would have wanted me,
" I certainly ſhould have come ſooner."

" Sooner!" (iterated Angelina;)——
" why, you might have ſtayed till dooms-
" day; for not to have come in time to
" ſave me, was as bad as not to come at
" all."

Good God! Hervey; how was I aſtoniſhed at ſuch language! The ſmall ſhare of my eſteem which Angelina had obtained, was chiefly owing to the filia aſſiduities, which ſhe, with ſuch apparent ſatisfaction, had beſtowed on her parent.

My heart was now chilled with horror, while her rude accents hung upon my ear.

"Let us go," ſaid the father; "we "ſhall be miſſed; and, as the day is "advancing, Belfield will be for getting "home."

"Home!" again ſhe iterated,— "home!—he muſt not go; by heaven "he ſhall not go!—If he depart, my "honour's gone for ever! Oh! no, no, "no!—he ſhall be mine, or ſhall not be "at all.

"So, a pretty, delicate dilemma this, "truly!" thought I.—"To preſerve "this lady's reputation, I muſt marry "her, or be murdered.—Here is another "ſpecimen of honour! This woman,— "this beautiful, raſh creature, would go, "unbluſhing, into a Court of judica- "ture, and verify my ſignature to a "contract, which, heaven knows! ſhe

"willingly

" willingly and wittingly deluded me " to ſign my name to; yet would ſhe " commit any act of horror or enormi- " ty, rather than the world ſhould ſuſ- " pect ſhe had yielded to the irreſiſtible " impulſe of nature, and, goaded beyond " the poſſibility of reſtraint, had ſuffered " me to gather ſweets, which, had ſhe " poſſeſſed the power of reflection, I am " very confident ſhe never would have " granted!"

" It muſt not—cánnot be;" ſaid Mr. " Rebutter; " it would ruin us. Let " him go quietly, and perſuade him to re- " turn with the Major. With his in- " fluence we may, perhaps, ſucceed.— " If not, we can but———"

" S'death! Sir;" (exclaimed the diſ- " tracted girl) " can you imagine that " the Major will connive at his own " noſe being cut off?—Has he not told " us what kind of man Mr Belfield is?

" —If you ſuffer him to go, we ſhall ne-
" ver ſee him again ; and I ſhall——O
" God !—I am loſt for ever!" They then uttered ſomewhat which I could not underſtand, and left the room.

The door of the parlour was ſoon opened. Mr. Rebutter, on entering, apologized for having abſented himſelf ſo long, but (ſeeing the book in my hand) was happy to find I had been amuſed.——Alas, he little ſuſpected by whom ! Miſs Rebutter followed, very ſoon, and complained of the lock on the cloſet door, which contained the tea-caniſter.—We then ſat down to tea. The old man aſſumed a cheerful countenance with tolerable facility ; but the daughter's labouring efforts to deck her face in ſmiles, evidently betrayed a ſoul extremely agitated ;—and, from my ſoul, I pitied her.

I cannot

I cannot ſay that I was alarmed for my own ſafety, even after what I had heard, but I trembled for Angelina ;— leſt the perturbation of her mind ſhould inſtigate her to commit an act, which might endanger her own life, or ſubject her to the horrors of a guilty conſcience : Therefore, well knowing that when a woman's paſſions run riot, and trample on diſcretion, there is no eſtimating what her phrenzy may impel her to, I, alſo, aſſumed a cheerfulneſs far diſtant from the feelings of my heart ; and, after deſiring the ſervant to order the chaiſe, aſked Mr. Rebutter if he would be in town the next day ; as, ſhould the Major be at leiſure, we might take advantage of his carriage to renew our viſit ? This, I confeſs, was playing the cards directly into their hands ; but I truſt you will allow that the exigency of the moment

moment amply juſtified me. Accordingly, not only the father readily promiſed to attend us; but the diſtreſſed beauty, flattered by my apparent intention, appeared much leſs embarraſſed; and ſaid, if the day were fine, ſhe would accompany him.

Mr. Rebutter did not quit the room again before I withdrew; conſequently nothing particular could, with decency, be ſaid either by me or Angelina; but, when going towards the door, ſhe caught an opportunity to preſs my hand, and, ſighing, whiſpered—"O "Belfield! do not forget me."——We then parted, with a ſilence ſo expreſſive, that it dimmed the luſtre of her lovely eyes, and touched her wounded heart with ſo melancholy a preſentiment, that ſhe could not even return me one—— "good night!"

A confuſion of ideas ſo deranged my intellects whilſt going home, that I could form no kind of reſolution how to act.—Happily, I had returned much ſooner than expected. Major —— was on a viſit, I, therefore, called in on Captain Kilmain.

The Captain very ſoon perceived the gloomy ſtate of my mind; and, concluding that I had been *pigeoned*, according to the little Doctors prognoſtication, rallied me with much humour, yet with a delicacy and tenderneſs which claimed my confidence; when, urged by the indiſpenſible neceſſity of adopting deciſive meaſures, and thoroughly convinced of his high notions of honour, on receiving his ſolemn promiſe of inviolable ſecrecy, I ventured to reveal the whole of the pavilion buſineſs to him.——The converſation which I had overheard I carefully concealed: for as I could not help

help thinking that it orginated in a paroxyſm of deſpair, at having ſuffered nature to triumph over coquettry, I attributed it to the ſtings of reflection, which having been ſurpriſed on its poſt, when the critical ſituation of the citadel required its utmoſt vigilance, ſuperciliouſly exerted tenfold energy,—vainly hoping to expiate dilatory errors, by inceſſantly communicating ideal alarms.—Of courſe, I pitied more than I blamed her.

Much as my mind was diſturbed, the honeſt Hibernian ſimplicity of Captain Kilmain, yielded me a momentary relief. How ſtrange!—that an unexpected trait of innocence in a profeſſed libertine ſhould excite our laughter, rather than claim our eſteem! But, ſuch is the vicious influene of cuſtom when implicitly yielded to! that the world is more apt to attribute ſuch a trait to folly, or to a knack at immoral witticiſms, than to a virtuous impulſe

ſtill

ſtill throbbing in an odd corner of the heart. I ſcarcely knew which to credit; but, believe, I gave a little to wit, and a little to virtue.——To the point, though.

On curſorily hinting at the iſſue of the conteſt, he exclaimed, (with his liſping impediment, occaſioned by the loſs of his tooth,)—" O Jeſus!—the poor " creature!——Pon my honour, Mr. " Belfield, but you ſhould have put the " cautionary lines of Sir Phelim O'Lea- " ry into her hand firſt;—then, if ſhe " had ſhut her eyes, you know,—why " —faith, Sir, ſhe would eaſily have " diſtinguiſhed that you could not be " blamed at all—at all.———But now, " troth! my dear fellow, though the " lady has been guilty of a little bit of " treaſon to her ownſelf, yet, you muſt " acknowledge you were, at leaſt, an acceſſary.

" acceſſary.—If ſhe winked at the rob-
" bery, you received the ſtolen
" goods."

I did not attempt to elude cenſure for my ſhare of the tranſaction ; but could not avoid ſmiling at the idea of introducing poetry at ſuch a juncture ; and begged to know what lines they could poſſible be, which in ſuch a criſis could promiſe to produce effect.

" To be ſure, and I can ſhew them
" to you directly ; for, by the lady of
" Loretto ! they were in my pocket at
" the time of the botheration, inſtead
" of being in the pretty creatures
" hand." He immediately gave me the following, which if not the moſt elegant, are not the leaſt adapted to the purpoſe.

" CAU-

"CAUTIONARY LINES,"

"BY"

"SIR PHELIM O'LEARY, OF LIMERICK,"

"*humbly addreſſed to the Ladies.*"

"If you a point of moment wiſh to gain,
"Flatter, and welcome, your enamoured ſwain;—
"And what like flattery ſo ſure ſucceeds?—
"Ah, what like flattery ſo ſtrongly pleads!
"Flatt'ry's the grand ſpecific for ſucceſs,
"'Twill make a bigot curſe,—an atheiſt bleſs!—
"Uplift the ſword;—unnerve th' uplifted arm;—
"Cool raging tyranny;—the ſtoic warm;—
"Avert the murd'ring, thund'ring,—pointed gun;—
"Make en'mies friends, and friends each other ſhun!
"Flatt'ry can never fail, though often tried;—
"So ſure is flattery when well applied!
"But ne'er permit your ſwain to kiſs, and toy,
"For Cupid is a ſubtle, dang'rous boy;

" In either hand he bears his pointed darts ;
" Theſe warm with chaſte deſire,—thoſe burn your hearts :
" As prudence, or as levity obtain,
" Theſe ſweetly glow,—thoſe kindle into flame.
" Beware the preſſing lip,—th' encircling arm ;—
" If cool 'tis raſh ; 'tis ruin if you're warm !
" For, once the paſſions rous'd by am'rous dallying,
" Reflection ſoon becomes too weak for rallying ;
" And nature ſtrongly urg'd will freely give
" Favours more rare than thoſe you would receive.
" So, in the low!and vales of Shannon's iſles,
" When Sol arrays the vernal day in ſmiles,
" And fragrant flow'rs bedeck the green-clad meads,
" The fleecy flock, unguileful, friſks, and feeds ;
" But, ſhould the ſhepherd wander far aſide ;—
" Or, chance, forget the equinoctial tide !
" The bleating innocents graze, heedleſs, round,
" And, warm'd by genial ſpring, they lightſome bound ;
" Yet, while in playful, wanton gambols toſs'd,
" The treach'rous flood ſteals in,—and they are ſurely loſt !"

After

After peruſing the verſes,—admiring Sir Phelim's goodneſs of heart, that could prompt him to exert his poetical talents on ſo important a ſubject, and attending to ſome judicious remarks of Captain Kilmain, on the ſituation of the iſlands in the Shannon, I could not help expreſſing my aſtoniſhment that the lady, if ſhe really had entertained ſerious deſigns on my perſon, ſhould have purſued ſo ſtrange a mode in order to effect them.

" As to that," ſaid the Captain,—
" I rather think the penalty of the con-
" tract was her principal object; be-
" cauſe, from what I have learnt, the
" Major is the *man in her eye*. And, as
" to the mode of conduct,—to be ſure
" Major —— did not tell us all what
" faſtidious notions you entertained re-
" ſpecting the woman who ſhould be
" your wife;—and how you had for-

" ſaken one of the fineſt women that
" ever the ſun kiſſed the cheek of, only
" becauſe ſhe had ſpoken a little peeviſh-
" ly of her father's behaviour; which
" you, your ownſelf, Mr. Belfield,
" thought extremely improper, or you
" certainly would have ſubmitted to it.
" It muſt have been owing to his long-
" witted advice, my dear, that Miſs Re-
" butter paid ſuch dutiful attention to
" her father, as you ſay ſhe ſaid; for,
" pon my honour! I am told that ſhe
" frequently lectures him very ſevere-
" ly; though, to be ſure, the old raſcal
" does not deſerve it at all—at all.——
" The ſame advice, too, might have in-
" duced her to attempt ſpringing a mine
" of beauty upon you, in hope of cap-
" turing a contract by a *coup de main*;
" for the Doctor—by my ſoul, he is a
" goſſiping little devil, ſure enough!—
" he ſays that old fly-boots is as poor

as

" as a *bog*, at Chriſtmas ;—that he racks
" his income to keep a good table, and
" maintain an elegant appearance ;——
" but, faith, dear, there can be no great
" harm in that, you know ; for if there
" is, God help poor, little Ireland !
" where it is done every day,—and by
" every body !—And that all the gran-
" deur is merely to entice gentlemen of
" fortune to viſit him, in hopes of
" wheedling one of them to marry his
" daughter ; or to pay a ſwinging pe-
" nalty which will enable the Major, on
" wedding the girl, to purchaſe a regi-
" ment. So, troth, my dear fellow, you
" cannot blame the dear creature for fol-
" lowing the Major's advice, and her
" father's inſtructions."

The obſervations of Captain Kilmain perfectly coincided with my own ſuſpicions, and I began to view the conduct of Major —— as equally culpable with

Mr. Rebutter's. Angelina, as well as myſelf, I knew, had been highly reprehenſible, but what ſhe had done to me, a ſmile, or a kiſs of her honeyed lips, would have abundantly compenſated;—what I had done was unattonable!——The balance kicked the beam on the lady's ſide; it was therefore incumbent on me not only to do an act of juſtice, but to ſooth her wounded mind as far as prudence would permit me.

I, accordingly, wrote a long letter to the injured beauty;——ſoftened the harſheſt features in *her* conduct, but, by no means attempted to extenuate my *own*. I informed her that I had inſtructed my ſolicitor to place *five thouſand* pounds in the funds, in her name,—but not to be ſubject to the controul of her father;—or her huſband, in caſe ſhe ſhould marry.—And that, ſhould an event, not wholly improbable, take

place,

place, it would be my duty, as well as my inclination, to make ample proviſion for it.——This done, I took an affecting leave of Captain Kilmain ;—ordered a chaiſe ; and without bidding farewell to the Major, arrived here nearly at midnight.

L'Amie appears highly delighted at having quitted ——— ; and has ſeemed to hint a kind of curioſity to learn the reaſon of my abrupt departure. But, although I eſteem him ſufficiently to induce me to depoſit the few ſecrets I poſſeſs in his cuſtody without heſitation ; yet, a kind of delicacy prevents me from communicating the pavilion ſcene; for, knowing his emaſculated ſtate, (but the knowledge of which I have never once given him the ſmalleſt reaſon to ſuſpect I had attained intimation of,) I cannot help thinking it would appear like ridiculing his deficiency of ſympathetic feelings.

Adieu

Adieu, my dear Hervey. As ſoon as I ſit down in Dublin, I will write again. Till then—and for ever,

I am,

Your moſt ſincere,

And truly affectionate,

Lionel Belfield.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

Mr. Belfield to Captain Belfield.

In continuation.

THE wind is directly againſt us, and my packet is not cloſed; I can, therefore, take the opportunity of informing you that, far from being compoſed after my recent adventures, my mind has this morning received additional chagrin.—Sir Charles Woodford is, I fear, beginning to verify all my predictions of him. He has—but let him ſpeak for himſelf.

LETTER XIX. (A copy enclosed.)

"*Sir Charles Woodford to Mr. Belfield.*"

"MY DEAR BELFIELD,

"WHEN kindred ſouls have once "been ſoothed by the balm of friend-"ſhip, it is no wonder that they ſhould "pant for an indiſſoluble union.

"Heaven knows! my dear friend, "when I ſought an alliance with Miſs "Somerville, my principal inducement "was to have the felicity of hailing "you my brother!—for, who that has "the honour of knowing Mr. Belfield

"would

" would not be emulous of ſo proud a
" title?

" You, my moſt worthy friend, hav-
" ing declined honouring the family
" with your hand, there can be little
" wonder that I ſhould, conſequently,
" have withdrawn mine.—To be your
" brother was my object then;—to be
" your brother is ſtill the moſt fervent
" deſire of my heart. My conſtant wiſh
" is that my ideas ſhould coincide with
" yours; and that my conduct, in a ſta-
" tion yet more exalted, ſhould ever be
" directed by your kind advice; for
" though I have the vanity to flatter
" myſelf that my heart is not ill adapt-
" ed for the breaſt of a legiſlator, yet, no
" doubt, your excellent inſtructions
" might prove of ineſtimable conſe-
" quence to me, as the more brilliant
" my abilities ſparkle in the ſervice of
" my King and Country, the ſooner I
" ſhall

" ſhall obtain the reward which ſuch
" popular, and true-engliſh conduct is,
" in theſe glorious times, moſt certain
" to experience. Suffer me then, my
" dear Belfield, as my ſoul has long been
" attached to you by the bond of friend-
" ſhip and languiſhes to be united by a more
" tender tye,—ſuffer me my dear friend
" to entreat you to honour me with your
" kind and fraternal influence with your
" lovely ſiſter in my behalf.——With a
" woman ſo exquiſitely amiable, and a
" brother ſo wiſe—ſo virtuous—ſo hon-
" ourable, I ſhould be the happieſt of
" men !

" I had it in contemplation to have
" acquainted you of my intention to
" make a ſettlement far ſuperior to your
" ſiſter's fortune, yet infinitely below
" her angelic beauty, and her merit;
" but as I know your ſentiments are ad-
" verſe to matters of that kind, I will

" not

" not wound your fine feelings by urg-
" ing propoſals ſo diſagreeable to you.
" Nor, in fact, knowing the violence of
" my attachment and the inviolability
" of my honour, and integrity, do I,
" myſelf, deem ſettlements ſo eſſentially
" neceſſary.—A jointure I know you
" are a friend to ; it certainly, my dear
" friend, in theſe degenerate times,
" ſhould be the *fine qua non* of every
" hymeneal contract. Heaven forbid
" that I ſhould ſurvive your moſt excel-
" lent ſiſter ! but ſhould I, as we are all
" mortal, you know, her dower ſhall be
" *three thouſand per annum*,—no thanks,
" —no compliment, my dear friend,—it
" ſhall be ſo,—*three thouſand per an-*
" *num* !

" Suffer me to entreat the favour of a
" line as ſoon as poſſible; and, until
" that arrives, I muſt content myſelf

" with hopes that the fervency of my " devotion to your amiable ſiſter will " meet the honour of your approba- " tion."

" I am, with perfect regard,

" My dear Belfield,

" Your ſincerely devoted,

" Much obliged, and

" Moſt obedient ſervant,

" *Charles Woodford.*"

From the little knowledge which I had been able to acquire of Sir Charles Woodford's diſpoſition, I did not heſitate to deem him an arrogant, opinionated egotiſt; you will, therefore, naturally ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe that I laughed heartily, even vexed as I was at his deſpicable conduct,—on thinking what ſtrange contortions, and twitchings of the muſcles of the face, a man of ſuch infinite ſelf-importance muſt have endured while writing ſuch fulſome, adulatory traſh to one whom he in his heart, I am confident, looked down to with ineffable contempt; and I had been puzzling myſelf, for three or four hours, to account for ſuch aſtoniſhing condeſcenſion, when, lo! at dinner, the myſterious machinations of the conciliating Baronet, were developed in an inſtant.

I dined at the Hotel, with an old ſchool-fellow who left Eton very ſoon after you were placed there,—I mean the wild Hazard Senegal; whoſe two grand objects of attention, and thoſe which occupied the greateſt part of his time—— whilſt at liberty, you will recollect,

were imitating the noiſe of *cats*, and gazing at the *coal-barges*, which he was ever fervently wiſhing to be a *Captain* of. With him were three gentlemen of the neighbourhood, whoſe time, by their converſation, ſeemed to be nearly as much occupied on the *turf*, as in the counting houſe.

In the *ſpeculative* line, as gameſters I mean, I found all, but one, had been conſiderable loſers.—that one was Senegal's relation. On confeſſing he had been pretty fortunate, the perſon who at next him exclaimed—" Aye, by " —— ! you have had pretty pickings, " indeed ! The *ten thouſand* you pluck- " ed from the pompous *peacock* of Tu- " retville was a good gold-coaſt *hit* for " you.—By all the dingy *dogs* of Ana- " maboe ! I would rather have carried " away a pinion of *his* wing, than have " heard of the Sally's arrival at Jamia-

" ca,

" ica, cramm'd-full, and the markets up
" a thouſand per cent, by the death of
" half the *devils* on the Iſland with the
" ſmall-pox!——Damme! what is the
" pleaſure of catching a *plumb*, by a
" *cotton hum-bug*, to the ſatisfaction of
" plucking ſuch a pompuous *prigſby* as
" Sir Charles Woodford?—But, tell us,
" my dear fellow;—how many were
" there at the *doing* him?"

" Three, beſide myſelf; but they did
" not *feather* above four thouſand a
" piece; for he turned *pouter* juſt as
" they were *laying in* for the carcaſe;—
" he ſtrutted and ſwore,—grinned moſt
" ghaſtly, and hopped away; or, by
" the ghoſt of Zalminda! they would
" have made his title-deeds rattle for
" him!"

" However, he is moſt confoundedly
" cholicked," (ſaid the gentleman, who
—talked

—talked ſo very *humanely* about half the Negroes at Jamaica dying of the ſmall-pox;) "for my brother tells "me that he borrowed the money of Sir "Harry Somerville; and that the old "gentleman is ſuing him for it, becauſe "he has refuſed to marry his daugh-"ter."

This was intelligence ſufficient for me.——The Baronet's condeſcenſion was clear expounded. I, therefore, ſeized the earlieſt opportunity to eſcape for a few minutes, and returned Sir Charles his letter, incloſed in the following.

LETTER

LETTER XX. (A copy encloſed.)

" *Mr. Belfield to Sir Charles Woodford* " *Bart.*"

" SIR CHARLES,

" ENCLOSED you will receive a " letter which came to me this morning, " and to which the name—' Charles " Woodford, is ſubſcribed.

" I can hardly—nay, I will not think " it poſſible that it could have been " written by you, Sir Charles, after " what has paſſed at Tofthall.——No; " Sir Charles Woodford is, ſurely a man

" of

" of too much honeſty—I will ſay no-
" thing of honour—to withdraw his at-
" tention from the amiable Miſs Somer-
" ville, after having repeatedly announ-
" ced his determination to make her his
" wife! and after having loſt ſo large a
" portion of the property of her family
" at——— races!

" May not the letter be a forgery,
" Sir Charles? I moſt ſincerely wiſh it
" may prove ſo! At all events, com-
" mit it to the flames; and I will en-
" deavour to forget that I ever receiv-
" it."

" I am,

" Sir Charles,

" your humble ſervant,

" *Lionel Belfield.*"

I have altered my route, and mean to ſail to ——; as I ſhall then have Mr. Senegal's company. We are to make a tour through the inland counties, and purpoſe reaching Dublin within the month.

Senegal is, I find, the very quinteſſence of merchants! He lives but on ſpeculation; and would not heſitate to contract with the proprietors of the menageries to ſupply them with the dead bodies from his Couſin's church-yard, if he could ſee a probability of five and twenty per cent profit by it. He ſwears—"by all the hopes of purchaſing a co-"ronet!" that half of Ireland will be ſtarving by Chriſtmas; and he is reſolved to *take* the whole kingdom—"with a "ſubſtitute

" ſubſtitute for potatoes, and a ſucced-
" aneum for butter-milk !"

As the wind is coming round—in the ſailor's phraſe, we may have the opportunity of breakfaſting at ſea—if our ſtomachs will indulge *us* with permiſſion to eat. When we arrive at——, I will write you again.

Your's ever,

Lionel Belfield.

P. S. Juſt as I was folding up my letter, *poor* L'Amie came into my room, pale, and almoſt breathleſs ! Anxious as I always feel at every thing which concerns him, I eagerly inquired into the cauſe of his perturbation ; but could only learn that the abrupt conduct of a perſon

perſon in the ſtreet, had much alarmed him ;—and the poor creature wept !

Inhuman ruffian !——I ſuppoſe ſome unfeeling wretch, ſuſpecting the beautiful youth's unhappy ſtate, has been callous hearted enough to ridicule him ;—as though he were the author of his own diſgrace and miſery !

Again, Adieu,

L. B.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

Miſs Somerville to Miſs Nettlethorpe.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

MY ſteps feel ſo infirm on the fairy ground which I am now tottering over, —the purport of my letter will appear ſo fantaſtical, ſo extremely viſionary, that I really bluſh, becauſe I know I am addreſſing a lady, whoſe good nature may indeed prompt her to ſmile at my narrative, but whoſe good ſenſe will not permit her to credit a ſyllable of it.—— Yet, as what I have to communicate has had a very diſagreeable effect on us, and

and may have ſtill more, I feel it incumbent on me to trouble you with a detail, convinced you will not only excuſe my ſimplicity, but, even, indulge me with your obſervations, ſhould you deem any neceſſary.

But, by way of prelude, let me inform you, Madam, that, in conſequence of the unaccountable loſs of my ever lamented ſiſter, various ſtories have been circulated round the country concerning her, and the people of the neighbourhood have, almoſt to a man, poſſeſſed themſelves with the idea of having ſeen her apparition! ſome, I doubt not, would ſwear they have ſeen her glide by them on the lawn,—ſome that they have ſeen her ſwimming on the lake,—and all that they have heard her make plaintive moans, ſometimes diſmal ſhrieks! yes, Couſin; and ſuch have

been the effects of thoſe reports, that a footpath through the lawn, which incommoded us much, and which we could not divert, has, for ſome weeks, been totally abandoned; the people, who have buſineſs at the village, contenting themſelves with walking more than a mile about.

None of the family have ſeen any thing to alarm them, Madam. And, as to the moans, and ſhrieks, they are eaſily accounted for; for the banks of the lake being much infeſted with mice, owls are, during the night, continually hovering about the trees which ſurround it, watching for their prey. Yet, ſilly as theſe tales are, they have a ſerious effect on Sir Harry's mind, and I am inceſſantly dreading leſt his health ſhould be affected by them. But a circumſtance which occured to Miſs Belfield, yeſterday evening, is of ſo extraordinary

a

a nature that I have thought it prudent to conceal it from my father, as it would certainly add to his uneaſineſs.

Miſs Belfield called here this morning, Couſin, (for ſhe could not reſt until ſhe had ſeen me,) and informed me that on taking her afternoon ride, whilſt her mother was aſleep, the fineneſs of the weather had induced her to go twice round the park ;—that when ſhe had reached a private gate which leads to the furthermoſt farm on our eſtate, and through which gate we generally uſed to paſs when going to viſit her, it had become duſk, and ſhe thought ſhe obſerved a head, nearly covered with a white veil, move from behind a tree ;—that, as the path lay within a few yards of the tree, by the time ſhe had got nearly even with it, a figure, all in white, darted

from behind, and juſt before it had reached the head of her horſe it ſeemed ſuddenly to ſink into the earth!

The horſe which Caroline rode was much affrighted, though, ſhe aſſures me, ſhe was not; but that having brought him under command,—the work of a few ſeconds only, ſhe turned his head towards the place whence the ſtrange ſight appeared, and caſting her eye towards the gate,—ſtrange to tell! Madam—but ſhe poſitively avers, that ſhe ſaw the ſame awful figure glide towards it;—that it ſlowly opened as the ſhade approached; and that the ſpectre had no ſooner vaniſhed than a ſound like thunder aſſailed her ears!—From all which, it inſtantly occurred to Caroline that it muſt have been the apparition of my ſiſter.

Ah, Madam! this was an alarming tale, indeed; and, you may be aſſured, ſhocked me exceedingly. But this ſeems

to

to have been ordained as a day of terror to me; for Miſs Belfield had not left me more than half an hour, when a ſervant brought me the encloſed letter from the poſt-office.

You may probably recollect old William, the gardener, Couſin; if not, it may be proper to inform you that he is a very whimſical—honeſt—faithful old ſervant, and uſed to be continually prognoſticating ſome untoward event, or other, relative to my poor ſiſter, and her intended marriage, which he was ſure to communicate to me, almoſt every time I went into the garden.—Unhappy!—that he anticipated ſo fatally!

LETTER XXII. (A copy encloſed.)

"*William Graftling to Miſs Somerville.*"

"MY HONOURD YOUNG LADY,"

"MARAKELS will never *ceas* as I "have told you *oftent* and *oſtent* and "*oftent* again when you have *teaſd* me "about my dreams as I have been "working in the garden, and *laffing* "and calling me a *kredlous* old *gran-* "*dad*,—*Didnt* I tell you ſcores of times "that a man is never ſure of his wife "till the garters be *throne*.—*Didnt* I "a thouſand and a thouſand times tell you "as how every melon I cut told me by

"*croſes*

" *croſes* and crooks that there would
" be no *wedding* in our houſe till melons
" *was* all gone,—*Didnt* I a *millyon* times
" tell you about winding ſheets in
" the *parler candels* and that I could not
" ſleep o nights for death watches,—
" *Didnt* I aye adad *Didnt* I tell you
" when you *laffed* at the people about
" the *crys* and the *ſkreems* in the lake
" and ſaid as how it was owls in the
" trees,—*Didnt* I tell you that *folk* now
" adays w*arnt* to be *fritend* by owls in-
" deed, And that owls *coudnt* talk and
" ſay the doleful things that men did
" ſay *theyd* heard ſomething elſe ſay,
" But all w*oudnt* do and I ſuppoſe I
" *ſhant* be *beleevd* in *that* Im going to
" ſay now *tho* my poor *ſtraind* leg that
" was almoſt *broke* is a witneſs that I
" ſay truth and nothing but truth, And
" the good woman of the houſe ſays as
" how *ſhe's* certain it muſt be truth be-
" cauſe

" cauſe I *hant* got a wink of ſleep never
" ſince without jumping and *flouncing*
" about in my dreams juſt as *thof Id*
" ſeen a *viſhun* every time I cloſed my
" poor eyes,—O my good *honourd* young
" lady *beleeve* a poor old man that *maynt*
" have long to live in the world when
" he tells you with all his ſoul that if
" ever he ſeed you in his born days he
" ſeed the pretty *Tulip* three nights
" *agone*,—O Madam Charlotte *tis* a
" *dredful* thing to think on to be ſure,
" but as I was croſſing the way on Fri-
" day night near about nine o-Clock, it
" *raind woundy* hard and was pitious
" dark and it *thunderd* a good deal when
" all at once as I had gotten almoſt over
" *anent* the door of the *hottel who ſhoud*
" I ſee between two great large lamps
" but o lord o lord, but your ſweet ſiſter,
" ſhe had a tall white robe upon her and
" a hat like a *ſteepel*, ſhe *lookt monſtrus*
" pale

" pale poor dear thing and mortal *yal-*
" *low*, and juſt as I was trying with all
" my might and *mayn* to ſay Our father
" to her it vaniſhed out of my ſight in a
" moment with a frightful *ſkreem*, and a
" clap of thunder *nockd* me down when
" my poor leg was ſo *ſtraind* and *bruiſd*
" that I was *fain* to be carried home
" and *hant* been able to ſet foot to the
" ground ſince,—*Thof* I think I ſhall
" ſoon come about if the *goſt* of my
" dear *honourd Tulip* do not *hant*
" me again,—But *Im* mortally *fright-*
" *end* about it and Mrs. Deadman ſays
" as how I ſhall ſee the Parſon this even-
" ing and *hell* talk the matter over with
" me and tell me how to act if ever the
" dear frightful *goſt* ſhould come again,
" O Madam Charlotte Madam Charlotte
" it is a terrible thing to ſee ſuch ſights
" and then to loſe *em* all at once ſo
" *woundy* quickly, God ſend I may

" never

" never ſee any thing again for if I do
" I ſhall certainly go out of my wits,
" and I *cant* get any body to lend me a
" melon that I might examine the lines
" on it and judge how matters are like-
" ly to fall, but on ſecond *thouts* the loſs
" may not be ſo very great for if I did
" not gather it myſelf the charm might
" not hold, ſo I muſt *een* truſt to provi-
" dence and hope for the beſt,—Be ſo
" good Madam Charlotte as to tell Sir
" Harry that I *ha* gotten my bit of mo-
" ney and if nothing jumps up to hin-
" der me I hope to ſee Tofthall again
" by Saturday at furtheſt,—So no more
" at preſent from your dutiful *frend* and
" ſervant."

" *William Graftling*,"

Now, Couſin, although you may not credit a ſyllable of the ſpectre part of theſe narratives, yet, you ſurely will allow they muſt have been very affecting to me.—Two ſuch ſtrange accounts ;—from different places too,—and both within half an hour of each other !—yes, Couſin, they were affecting indeed !

Miſs Belfield is a very amiable young creature ;—poſſeſſes an excellent underſtanding, and is, by no means, addicted to ſuperſtition. She obſerved that ſhe was in ſo fine a ſtate of health, as to prevent every poſſibility of attributing the alarming appearance to any momentary defect of imagination ; of courſe, ſhe is clearly of opinion as to having ſeen ſomething preternatural.

As to poor, old William's artleſs tale, it is of ſo ſtrange a nature that I ſhould not have heſitated about making immediate inquiries concerning it, but the letter

ter is not dated from any place, and the poſt-mark is ſo very defective as to yield me no kind of information.—If a ſmall fine were levied on the poſt-maſters for every letter, the poſt-mark on which is not legible, it would, in my humble opinion be rendering the public an eſſential ſervice.—However, as the good, old man ſays he hopes to be at home by Saturday, ſhould he retain his uſual portion of truly ruſtic garrulity, we ſhall not remain long without intelligence; when, ſhould you, on information, deem it adviſeable, further inquiries may be made. At all events, I truſt you will approve of my ſilence to Sir Harry on ſubjects ſo ſtrange, and, to him, diſtreſſingly alarming.

I am, with ſincere reſpect,
Dear Madam,
Your affectionate Couſin,
Charlotte Somerville.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

Miſs Nettlethorpe to Miſs Somerville.

MY DEAR CHARLOTTE,

I Have received your letter but a very few minutes, and ſincerely hope to have this ready by the departure of the poſt. —I could wiſh it, if poſſible to travel on the wings of the wind, for I am exceedingly alarmed about your *ſpectre of the park*.

Your account, as well as that of public report, in favour of Miſs Belfield's good ſenſe, and her own opinion of her good ſtate of health, precludes every

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probability of a mental derangement ſufficient to conceive ſo awful a tale; I am, therefore, dreadfully apprehenſive of ſome deſperate ſcheme to terrify her to ſo great a degree, that ſhe may be robbed, or ill uſed, without being capable of indentifying the ruffians. You will, conſequently, do well, in my opinion, if you take the earlieſt opportunity to put your young friend on her guard;—if caution be not abſolutely neceſſary, it will certainly be commendable in you; and will, no doubt, be ſo received.

How came your friend to venture ſo far from the houſe—ſo late in the afternoon too,—without a ſervant?—Even the preſence of a child may diſconcert ſchemes laid with great dexterity.—She was, undoubtedly, very imprudent to be without any attendant at all!

Your gardener's letter puzzles me, not a little, I muſt confeſs. In a town,—in ſo public

public a place as the door of an Hotel,—only nine o'Clock in the evening too! —It is not cuſtomary, my dear, for the moſt viſionary to behold ſpectres in ſuch a place, at ſo early an hour.—Bacchus ſeldom conjures up ghoſts in Hotels before midnight.

The poor, old man was, moſt certainly, indulged with a very favourable groupe of atmoſpherical ingredients for the compoſition of a ſpectre ſcene;—a dark night,—heavy rain,—loud thunder! (and ſtrong too, for it knocked him down, it ſeems.)—Why, the dulleſt blockhead that ever attempted to raiſe an apparition would not have wiſhed for more powerful acceſſaries. There are but two more, I think, in the ſpectre-maker's catalogue,——vivid lightning, and a charming hurricane. I do not doubt but the old viſionary had his due portion of lightning with his thunder, though his

attention might have been too minutely attracted by the ſpectre, to have perceived it, and as to the hurricane, many viſionaries have deemed it of doubtfull good in the apparition arcana. Some Conjurers have deemed a tempeſt too whiſtling, and ruffling, for the dignity of a ghoſt; others ſay, that a phantom can never appear ſo graceful, and terrific, as when all is moſt melancholy, dark, calm, and ſilent!—and others, that the roaring of the wind deſtroys the fine, ſoul-thrilling effect of the rumbling of the thunder. I might have added the croakings of ravens, the ſhriekings of owls, and the flittings of batts; but as they generally compoſe very *material* parts of thoſe immaterial beings, it would be degrading them to rank them as mere acceſſaries.

But, ſeriouſly, if one can be ſerious on ſo fantaſtical a ſubject, the ſhriek, and apparent

apparent alarm of the Gardener's ghoſt puzzles me extremely. You, my dear, muſt be too converſant in the myſterious manufacture of thoſe unwelcome viſitors not to know that they are, univerſally, created to terrify others,—rather than to be affrighted themſelves! Whoever heard of a ghoſt becoming poltroon, and ſhamefully fleeing from the very wretch, to whom it's phantomſhip was ſent for the ſimple purpoſe of ſcaring into fits? Had the *ſpectre of the Hotel* marched majeſtically up to old William, and, after having petrified him with horror, had vaniſhed in a vivid flaſh; or had ſkipped over a church-yard wall, on the ſelf-tolling of a diſmal bell, I ſhould have entertained a reſpectable opinion of his ghoſtſhip; but, if William did really feel the rain,—hear the thunder,—ſee the lamps, and obſerve ſuch puſillanimous conduct in the ſpectre,—why,

I will not hesitate to declare that such a ghost was not worth a cold sweat, or a bristled head of hair. And yet the story has, more than once, tempted me to indulge ideas, which set even probability at defiance, and—but no more of spectres, for the post-man is at the gate.

Again let me advise you to put Miss Belfield on her guard; and if you obtain any further information from the Gardener, let me be acquainted with it.

Your's most sincerely,

Letitia Nettlethorpe.

END OF FIRST VOLUME.

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